

North Central Valley
JACL/CSUS Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

NEWTON ISHIURA

September 9 and 18, 1997
Sacramento, California

By Hiroko Tsuda
for
Florin JACL

Consortium of JACL Chapters
Florin-French Camp-Lodi-Placer-Stockton
California State University, Sacramento
Special Collections/University Archives
Sacramento, California

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MISSION STATEMENT

To collect and preserve the historical record of the multigenerational experience of Japanese Americans and others who befriended them in the communities of the JACL Chapters of this Consortium. The books produced will enhance the CSUS/Japanese American Archival Collection housed in the California State University, Sacramento Archives for study, research, teaching and exhibition. This unique Collection of life histories provides a permanent resource for the use of American and international scholars, researchers and faculty, as well as a lesson for future generations to appreciate the process of protecting and preserving the United States Constitution and America's democratic principles.

PREFACE

This JACL/CSUS Oral History Project provides completed books and tapes of Oral Histories presented to the interviewed subjects, to the California State University, Sacramento/Japanese American Archival Collection, and to the local JACL Chapters. Copyright is held by the Consortium of JACL Chapters and California State University, Sacramento. Photocopying is limited to a maximum of 20 pages per volume. Photographic rights of the primary portrait of interviewees are held by Gail Matsui Photography.

This project will continue the mission of the Florin JACL which recognized the necessity of interviewing Japanese Americans: "We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their seventies, eighties and nineties. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness." This same urgency to conduct interviews is felt by the other North Central Valley (Sacramento/San Joaquin Valley) JACL Chapters. There are still many stories that must be told.

The Oral Histories in the Japanese American Archival Collection relate the personal stories of the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal and internment of civilians and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry. There is a wide variety of interviews of former internees, military personnel, people who befriended the Japanese Americans, Caucasians who worked in the internment camps and others, whose stories will serve to inform the public of the fundamental injustice of the government's action in the detention of the Japanese aliens and "non-aliens", so that the causes and circumstances of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood.

The population of those who lived through the World War II years is rapidly diminishing, and in a few years, will altogether vanish. Their stories must be preserved for the historians and researchers today and in the future.

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INTERVIEWER

Hiroko Tsuda, M.A., is a Registered Nurse and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She is a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, who has taught Sunday School classes at Mountain View, Gardena and Sacramento Buddhist Church Sunday Schools. She is a member of the Oral History Project and Chairperson of the August Women's Peace Event on the Florin JACL Board.

At the Time of Remembrance program on March 1, 1997, Rev. Ishiura asked her to be his interviewer. She felt it was indeed an honor and a privilege to be asked to work on his oral history book.

INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

September 9 and 18, 1997
Home of Rev. Newton Ishiura
6849 Flintwood Way
Sacramento, California 95831

TRANSCRIBING AND EDITING

Tapes of the interview were partially transcribed by Joanne Iritani and completed by Heidi Sakazaki. Hiroko Tsuda and Rev. Newton Ishiura edited the transcripts.

TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tapes will be kept by the Florin Japanese American Citizens League and in the University Archives at the Library, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento California 95819.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Introduction

With Reverend Ishiura's permission I have referred to him by his first name Newton. This name is not only unique it commands respect immediately. Newton has been a pacifist and an activist throughout his life. As a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist priest who has practiced interfaith ministry, he has helped many people from all walks of life. He has been in the company of many famous world leaders, but remains humble. His love for journalism whereby he has recorded his activities made this biographical sketch possible.

Usually this segment is a brief Biographical Summary; however, it was felt that too many important segments of his life would be omitted if it were left to a two-page summary. The Oral History Interview Section is complete in itself and the reader will be able to hear his opinions of various events and issues. However, the Biographical Sketch will complement the dialogue section and vice versa. Since the unfolding of one's memory bank is not always exact or chronologically organized, the biographical sketch provided the medium for these rich memories.

Birthplace (Kilauea, Kauai)

Newton was born on October 15, 1918 in Kilauea, Kauai of the Hawaiian Islands. He is a *nisei*. He was born on a sugar plantation village, where the majority of the population was of Japanese ancestry. His father the Reverend Shuken Ishiura and his mother Tsuyu Okamura Ishiura named him Takashi. The name Newton was the Buddhist name he chose when he was ordained a Jodo Shinshu priest at the young age of 22. He was ordained in Kyoto, Japan by the Chief Abbot Kosho Ohtani in October 1938. He then legalized this name and has used the name Newton exclusively in his secular and nonsecular activities.

Both his parents were immigrants from Kumamoto City, Japan. They were married in Kilauea. His father was practicing as a Jodo Shinshu minister on Kauai when Newton was born, the first son and second child in birth order. He had an older sister Mieko, who was 3 years older than he.

His father enjoyed partaking alcohol with his friends in town in the evening and his faithful horse would bring him home safely. The horse would tap his hoof 3 times on the porch, alerting Mrs. Ishiura that the passenger was home and would need help getting into the house. His mother would lift him off the horse and tuck him into bed.

After his father bought an automobile he was involved in several accidents. Newton was seriously injured in one of the accidents. His mother was quite frightened because he would drive home in an intoxicated state. Because of his father's alcoholism, Newton vowed to his mother that he would never partake of alcohol. To this day he has kept that promise.

When Newton was about 2 years old, he returned with his whole family to Japan because his grandfather had died. His grandfather had been the head minister of Daieiiji Temple in Kumamoto City. While visiting in Japan his sister died tragically from having a high fever at the tender age of 5. During this brief sojourn to Kumamoto City, his mother gave birth to his brother Motomu. His father returned to Hawaii to continue his ministry in America, and left the daily management of the temple to his uncle.

Daieiiji Ancestral Temple (Kumamoto, Japan)

His grandfather had been the 14th generation of priests to occupy the family temple in Kumamoto City. His father became the 15th generation priest, and his younger brother, Sunao, became the 16th generation priest to assume the leadership of Daieiiji. Sunao is now the Reverend Ryushin Ishiura. Newton chose to remain in America.

The family history can be traced back to years even before Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) began his siege to conquer all of Japan. At the beginning, the Ishiura ancestral temple had been of the Shingon sect. However, when one of his ancestors went to help the Jodo Shinshu followers who were defending the Osaka Castle against Oda Nobunaga's troops, not only did he successfully help defend the castle but became converted to the Jodo Shinshu Sect. The family temple has since been affiliated with the Nishi Hongwangji Temple of Kyoto.

Kona, Hawaii (1922)

Upon leaving Japan, his father moved his family to Kona on the big island to continue his ministry, this time at the Kona Hongwanji. His mother taught sewing, etiquette and the Japanese language to the congregation, as well as, tend to duties befitting a minister's wife.

Newton doesn't recall any vivid expectations that his father had of him except to learn the way of Kendo (Japanese fencing) from him. At first Newton was fascinated with the uniform because he was the first among his friends to have such an outfit. However the frequent mandatory practices with his father became burdensome and he began to hate kendo. Newton confesses that this hate for kendo was transferred to hate for his father.

Newton attended Konawaena Grammar School in Kona and Pahala Grammar School in Pahala. In grade school Newton was a sickly child. He spent a greater part of his school days either in a hospital or going to the hospital for medical care. There were about 35 students in his second grade class. It was the general practice during these times that all children have their tonsils removed. So one day the entire class walked down to

the plantation hospital for that purpose. "I put my hospital gown on but just freaked out. I scooted out with the staff chasing after me. I was a fast runner, outrunning the orderlies and nurses. So, to this day, I was the only one among the 35 students, who still has his tonsils intact," he recalls.

Being in poor health, Newton wondered a lot about studying to become a doctor. Those ideas changed when a Mr. Cecil K. Dotts became the new school principal. Mr. Dotts understood his body language that he did not like the mandatory, hourly gardening time. "My plot was the worst in the whole school. It was untidy and riddled with weeds," he mourns. One day Mr. Dotts called Newton into his office and suggested that he become one of the office monitors. He would be graded for that work instead of garden work. By the 6th grade he learned to type in order to put out the school bulletin. He wrote an editorial for each issue. Eventually, he wrote about the conditions on the plantation community and some editorials about what a school can do. Eventually his writings turned to politics, both local and national. He was quickly reminded that a school bulletin should be limited to information about the school and its district, and that politics be left to the politicians and city reporters. That was the beginning of Newton's lifelong hobby into journalism, either being an editor of church publications or contributing articles of interest to various local newspapers.

After completing 8th grade at Pahala Grammar School, he went into the 9th grade at Hilo Intermediate School. In 1934, he enrolled at Hilo High School as a sophomore. To attend Hilo High he was boarded in the church dormitory run by the Hilo Hongwanji. He was dismissed from this dormitory because he was rebellious and defied its rules and regulations. Newton's father then acted as a mediator and found a family who accepted Newton into their home. He continued in very poor health. "I was committed to the Matayoshi Hospital and commuted to school from that hospital," he declares.

Return to Daiei Temple (1935)

In 1935, the Rev. Shuken Ishiura uprooted his family and decided to move back to Kumamoto City, Japan. Midterm into his sophomore year and at the formidable age of 17, he and his whole family moved back to Kumamoto City. The family now consisted of both his parents, his three brothers Motomu (born in Japan), Sunao (Kona) and Sadamu (Pahala) and himself. This time his father returned to take over the daily operation of the family temple. The Rev. Shuken Ishiura became the 15th succeeding active leader of the family temple.

Returning to Japan, Newton found adjustment difficult because he was now Americanized in his thinking and actions, and was neither fluent nor literate in the Japanese language. He was 5 feet 9 inches tall, taller than most Japanese boys of his age and very lanky. Therefore, when he enrolled in a special class of overseas students at Kyushu Gakuin (middle school) to learn the Japanese language, he was not only older but taller. He felt awkward and embarrassed. He buckled down and studied earnestly. He became proficient enough after only 1 year of study to take and pass the high school entrance examinations and enrolled in that high school.

He chose to continue his studies at the Kyushu Gakuin, a private Lutheran Christian School. His father gladly acknowledged his choice and paid the tuition. While there he attended the religious lectures and became very interested in the Christian religion. He joined the White Sheep Society for students aspiring to become a Christian minister. Upon graduation in 1938, Newton was offered a Lutheran Church scholarship to attend Amherst College in Massachusetts.

At the high school, Newton attended the lecture of evangelist, the Reverend Toyohiko Kagawa. He was very impressed with him and especially liked his gospel of working with the poor and downtrodden in slums. However, Newton was not thoroughly satisfied with that. "With social gospel must come a logistic balance of theological thinking. None of my kind mentors could give me that [balance]," he contemplated. Until one day with trepidation that his father may castigate him for becoming a renegade, he went to him with one simple question. The question was "Why must I pray for my salvation?" His father's answer was, "Before one is born, one is already in Amida's Hands according to Jodo Shinshu." Usually a rigid and temperamental man, his father showed compassion for Newton, rather than scorn. "I was overwhelmed by his understanding and straightforward reply, that I became convinced that there is something in Jodo Shinshu that I did not understand. This was the deciding factor in my aspiration to enter Ryukoku University in 1938," he confides.

College years (1938 - 1941)

In the spring of 1938 before leaving Kumamoto City for Kyoto to begin his undergraduate studies, his mother gave him two letters. One was addressed to a ballet school and the other to a voice teacher at the Kyoto Women's College. "I thought that this was my mother's way to announce that I will be studying in Kyoto. When I took the letter to the ballet school, the master whose name was Yasumura replied that he had received a letter from my mother," Newton remembers. Yasumura Sensei welcomed him and expressed that he hoped that Newton will enjoy coming to his studio for lessons. The second letter was to a voice teacher, who also acknowledged that his mother had written to her. Newton tried to attend the practices as scheduled.

He felt enragement toward these prearranged lessons as he did not fully understand the need for them. During semester break, he confronted his mother of her motives. She quietly explained to him that the purpose was not to polish him to become a ballet dancer. Far from it, her intention was that he will become disciplined and graceful as he attends to his duties at the altar. i.e. lighting the candles. For a priest, a resonant voice would be necessary to read sutras. So, she recommended voice lessons. Her desire was to help him to become a better priest.

That same year Newton matriculated into Ryukoku University in Kyoto, his father's alma mater. When his father was a student, the university was located in Tokyo and named Takanawa University. Newton states that his father lamented the decision of

the officials to relocate it to Kyoto.

From 1938 to 1941, Newton studied in the seminary division. His major concentration was Jodo Shinshu. He was graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Jodo Shinshu Studies. Upon graduation he was allowed to choose his Buddhist name as is the tradition. His father had picked out the name *Shunken*. *Shun* came from his boyhood name of Takashi, and *Ken* from his father's name, Shuken. Newton did not choose that name to his father's dismay. By the suggestion of his mentor, the Rev. Shinkaku Ernest Hunt, Director of the English Department of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii he selected Newton. Upon graduation from Ryukoku University he was ordained as a priest at the Nishi Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto, headquarters of the Jodo Shin sect.

World War II clouds were ominous during the years surrounding his graduation. Newton learned that the Japanese gendarmes and police were scrutinizing him because of his antimilitaristic, pro-peace speeches he made as a student in large gatherings. The Japanese Army was becoming very aggressive in Manchuria and China. In the spring of 1941 a kind government official in the American consulate urged Newton to take the next boat and return to the U.S.A. Newton was in danger of being detained and possibly imprisoned.

Voyage Back to America (July 1941)

On July 7th, 1941, with his parents' blessings and the well wishes of his two younger siblings, he bid farewell to his family. Only his father accompanied him to the dock in Kobe. He boarded the ship *Tatsuta Maru* and cruised the Inland Sea to Yokohama. There at Yokohama waiting to wish him a safe trip was his brother Motomu. He was a student at Meiji University and was active in the Student Cadet Corps training to become a pilot. Motomu's farewell message to Newton was: "I'll meet you in the Pacific." Newton sailed for America on July 8th. He was seasick and bedridden on this voyage from Yokohama to Honolulu, but regained his strength for his voyage from Honolulu to San Francisco. But during this interval the U.S.-Japan trade relations became strained leaving the ship in limbo unable to dock. One day the ship was closer to California, then another night, closer to Hawaii. Being young and impatient, Newton and several of his sea acquaintances decided to see the captain. They tried to negotiate a deal, to buy a life boat and row themselves to San Francisco. The captain was hilariously amused by their proposal. "We knew it was 'no can do,' but we tried, although no one in our group knew how to swim," he recalls.

Finally in late July the *Tatsuta Maru* was allowed to dock at the pier in San Francisco. Upon debarking onto the pier, he saw the Rev. Toyohiko Kagawa, the evangelist. After they exchanged greetings, Newton informed Rev. Kagawa that he was now an ordained Buddhist priest and prepared to begin his work. The Rev. Kagawa wished Newton well and boarded the same ship for its return voyage to Japan.

Newton thought his days of surveillance were over but that was not to be. All passengers aboard the ship bound for Los Angeles were herded into trains with window shades down. Then, they were guarded by the military police. After spending a night at San Pedro Immigration Station, Newton was bailed out by his maternal uncle Mr. Akira Okamura.

Mr. Okamura had immigrated to this country at the invitation of his older sister, Newton's mother, to teach the Japanese language. He taught many years in Oxnard until about 1940. When he realized that the U.S.-Japan relationships were not improving, he decided to go into business for himself. He tried several food industries but eventually settled for the restaurant business. He owned and operated the Compton Chop Suey. "I didn't like the idea of *isoro*, living off someone. So, I settled down to peeling several sacks of onions in the early morning, and then bussing and cleaning tables after the restaurant opened. I didn't shed tears because of loneliness but that onion sting is something!" Newton muses.

Buddhist Mission of North America

After about a month of manual labor, he was asked to deliver two very large boxes of Buddhist Gatha and Service books to the Buddhist Mission of North America Headquarters in San Francisco. (The mission was renamed Buddhist Churches of America or B.C.A in 1944.) He met Bishop Ryotai Matsukage and the Rev. Kenryo Kumata at the headquarters. Enthusiastically he inquired about a ministerial position, "Sorry, we have no position for you!" was the reply. Feeling very defeated, he returned to Compton thinking that he either had to find another line of work or go back to school. Occasionally, a nearby Japanese language school hired him as a substitute.

One day in August 1941, he received an invitation from a group of stern looking Japanese men sitting in the restaurant. The heftiest and sternest among them demonstratively asked him, "Are you Ishiura? *Uchi ni konkai? Betsuin ni konkai?*" He thought in the United States, there shouldn't be a "*betsu*" system, but recalling his mother's instruction to be always humble, he did not question. Newton explains that what was asked of him was, "Won't you come to the Los Angeles Betsuin Temple as a new hire?" He later learned that Bishop Matsukage wanted to get in touch with Newton to inform him that a position was open at the Los Angeles Betsuin.

The stern person was none other than Rinban Jokai Kow, the Rinban of Los Angeles Betsuin. He really was a very warm person, although his demeanor and his language did not reflect that at their first meeting. Newton describes Rinban Kow as a very generous and protective leader. The Rinban went to bat for those serving under him at the Betsuin board of directors' meetings. Newton received his first black suit through his generosity. If Newton was assigned to an evening service in a branch temple far away, the rinban would advise him not to report to work early in the morning. He wanted Newton to get a good night's rest and show up in the afternoon. Newton states that he didn't want to take advantage of Rinban Kow's kindness, so he showed up to work early as usual.

First Assignment (September 1941)

One day in September Rinban Kow called him to his office with a broad smile on his face and said: "The bishop called for me to select someone to fill a vacancy, and I would like to recommend you over anyone else. It's a terrific temple, and I want you to go!" Newton took the assignment and left for Bakersfield, California with his sole possession, a *yanagi gori*, a willow basket suitcase. When he arrived by train in the midday, there was no one there to greet him. The farmers were all tending to their fields. He found his way to the temple, a wooden frame building with a Japanese sign indicating it was the Bakersfield Buddhist Temple. While sitting on the porch steps at dusk, a lone farmer greeted him. The farmer asked, "You *ga new bonsan ka*" "That (language of Japanese mixed with English) floored me," Newton states. This farmer was the church president.

He has fond memories of his first assignment as a full-fledged, 22 year old minister. The families invited him for many meals. He was so grateful to them because he did not know how to cook. He conducted his first funeral service with help from Rev. Miyoshi Okita. When the mortician left the casket with the body in the church, as was the Japanese custom then, he asked that it be removed to the mortuary. His bedroom was next to the sanctuary and he was frightened by its presence. He wasn't there very long when Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese militia on December 7, 1941 and World War II began.

By telephone, Newton was given an emergency assignment by Bishop Matsukage to go to the Los Angeles Betsuin to take command. Almost all their resident ministers (about 10) were rounded up by the FBI and incarcerated in the Tajunga Detention Center near La Crescenta, California. Not knowing that he would not be returning to Bakersfield, Newton packed only 1 frock and left for Los Angeles in a hurry. Just before starting up the grapevine highway, a California Highway Patrol officer stopped him and asked him for his passport. Newton quickly responded, "I'm an American, so I don't ordinarily carry my passport with me. Do you have your passport?" Newton was allowed to drive up the grapevine into Los Angeles.

Newton's new assignment was to tend to the welfare of the ministers' wives and their families who were left behind. His quarters were now on the second floor of the Betsuin Temple. (This building now houses the Japanese National Museum). Most of the wives were not fluent in English and they had never been separated from their husbands. Newton had to fill a new role, that of leader of an estranged community at a very young age.

When he visited the Buddhist ministers imprisoned at Tajunga, he was saddened to see them wearing striped prison garbs. Most of the prisoners were community leaders such as Buddhist and Shinto priests, Japanese association leaders, Japanese Language School teachers and businessmen. All were considered dangerous politically.

Executive Order 9066 (February 1942)

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, a mass evacuation of Nikkeis living on the west coast began. All people of Japanese ancestry "alien and nonalien" in the Los Angeles area were ordered to relocate to the temporary Santa Anita Assembly Center, which was the Santa Anita Racetracks. "Following the orders as directed by the Western U.S. Army Command was foremost, and to see that orderly and responsible reaction by the Buddhist followers predominated. Lurking beneath these loyalty feelings was naturally human emotions of justice, but it was not the time to erupt, but to live it," he philosophizes. There were mixed emotions about loyalty and justice being denied, but he felt that it was not the time to rebel but to live through it.

In March of 1942, Newton went with his fellow American citizens and Japanese immigrants to the Santa Anita Assembly Center. On the makeshift pulpit Newton continued to preach. "My Sunday sermons at the Center were patriotic, that I am American, that this is my country. These words did not set well with the so-called *kibei* congregation," he reminisces.

Hillcrest Sanitarium (1942 - 43)

A few weeks after he settled at the center, he hemorrhaged from his lungs. He was diagnosed with active tuberculosis. Newton was transferred to the Hillcrest Sanitarium in La Crescenta, California. Wanting to avoid surgery to remove his ribs to collapse the diseased portion of his lungs, he placed a sand bag on the diseased side of his chest. Thus, he remained bedridden as he meditated for about 6 weeks. He made an astonishing recovery, thereby, avoiding surgery.

At its peak, the population of *nikkei* inpatients at the sanitarium was 168. They had been gathered from 10 concentration camps. Gradually the non*nikkei* patients were transferred out of Hillcrest. A strong bondage was developed among its residents, who were isolated from their loved ones. Those classified as ambulatory were assigned internal routine jobs such as handling mail or doing clerical work. The residents were free to roam the premise but restricted from leaving the enclosed area.

Sundays were visitation days. Besides Protestant and Catholic clergies, the Reverend Julius Goldwater from the L.A. Hongwanji Betsuin Temple visited with members of the Buddhist Brotherhood of America. Mrs. Ruth Hollander and other members took turns visiting and even rolled sushi for the residents.

When Newton recovered enough to be given ambulatory status, he conducted bedside services to those who desired his ministry. At first he tried to minister in his pajamas, but no one was interested. One day a Catholic clergyman gave him his collar to wear, and almost immediately Newton was accepted as a minister. He initiated and participated in interfaith services at the sanitarium. He also started a newsletter about the people in the sanitarium, and sent it to the patient's loved ones in the camps. He used the hectograph machine with the sticky gel to reproduce copies. He enjoyed this work.

Upon regaining his health he was discharged from the sanitarium. Desiring a warm climate to nurture his recuperation from his illness, he chose to move to the Gila River Relocation Camp in Butte, Arizona in the spring of 1943. As he was contemplating on his future, an opportunity to join Professor Joseph Yamagiwa at Michigan State University was offered. This job was to work with the professor to write a Japanese-English dictionary for the Army Specialized Forces. Eager to start earning reasonable wages, Newton accepted the job. He moved out of the camp as did many other American citizens to areas not affected by the War Relocation Authority.

Army Specialized Training Program at Yale University (1943 - 46)

In the late summer of 1943, he received an invitation from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut to teach the Japanese language in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). The students were enlisted servicemen from buck privates to sergeants. He taught morning and afternoon classes every day of the week. While working in the ASTP program, he devised methods to make language and culture alive to participants by writing and directing plays. He was given permission to use the Yale School of Drama stage and props. Every play had a full house, as the Commander of ASTP made it compulsory for all ASTP students to attend.

Not one to stay idle during his hours of leisure, he was granted permission and audited a course taught by Dr. Franklin Edgerton, Professor of Sanskrit. On campus he met Stanley Okada, a volunteer at the New York Buddhist Church. When Newton told him that he was an ordained minister, Stanley asked him if he would help the church. Stanley said that the Rev. Hozen Seki was incarcerated in a detention center in North Dakota and the church was without a minister. On the weekends Newton took the train to New York City to help with the ministry at the New York Buddhist Church. It was located on 171 West 94th Street, off Amsterdam Ave.

New York Buddhist Church

The New York Buddhist Church was a three-story building with a full basement leading into a backyard. The basement was a church office where Stanley Okada served as office manager; the first floor was the sanctuary; the second floor was the minister's residence; and the third floor served as living quarters for singles, such as Stanley Okada and Haru Ohnuki. Haru was a former La Scala Opera singer. The church office also served as a drop-in center for Nikkeis living in and around the big city. (Currently the NYBC is located on Riverside Blvd.)

Following the Protestant tradition, Sunday School services were held. They were held before the adult services. Among the children in attendance were Spanish-speaking children. Adult English services were held at 11:00 a.m. Hundreds of servicemen attended the services to experience probably the last of a Buddhist fellowship, before being shipped overseas. The attendance at the Japanese language services in the afternoon was sparse. On Saturdays and after regularly scheduled Sunday worship

services, memorial services were held. Mrs. Satomi Seki was the organist, but in her absence available members pumped the organ.

During the counseling sessions with the GIs, Newton felt at a loss for they were to be in combat duty and coming home alive was a remote possibility. He used to quote to them from one of the familiar Buddhist gathas, especially, No. 527, "When We See the Golden Sun." "I would wish them all good luck, and remind them that Amida will be with them always!" he solemnly recalls.

One unique regular activity was the family dinner held every Sunday. Since the majority of the early evacuees (resettlers from camp) were single, the church provided an opportunity to sign up for a dish, and cook and share in a family dinner. Dinner was wholesome and delicious, and it created a family atmosphere enjoyed by all once a week.

Eastern Young Buddhist League (1943)

This weekend volunteer ministry branched out into his becoming a circuit minister for Eastern, Midwest and some Southern States. The Rev. Gyodo Kono of Midwest Buddhist Temple proposed a formation of a coordinating group of these branches, which became the Eastern Young Buddhist League or EYBL. Stanley Okada was elected as its the first president and Newton was appointed as the executive director. "Nirvana" bulletins with Kevin McKelvy and Newton as editors were published for several issues by the EYBL.

The league's first proposal was to become a catalyst for funding a program to train ministers, as there was a lack of trained ministers. At this time Newton's work expanded toward his becoming a civilian Buddhist chaplain at Ft Snelling and Camp Savage.

During the weekdays at Yale University, Newton would turn on the radio each morning to listen to the news. One morning in August 1945, he heard Ed Morrow broadcast directly from Tinian Island in the Pacific: "A B-29 was about to take off, and that this particular flight with a heavy bomb load was headed for Japan." The broadcast did not say specifically where, but he later learned that it was headed for Yahata, Fukuoka. Next day in class, he learned that an atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima City, the alternate target.

Newton was teaching in the ASTP classroom when the news was broken. He, as did many others, had mixed emotions about the dropping of the atomic bomb, which killed approximately 100,000 civilians and some military personnel instantly. With the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Cities by the U.S. Military, World War II came to an abrupt halt. Japan surrendered four weeks later.

He continued to teach in the ASTP program until it was closed, and worked this church circuit ministry until the end of 1946. Bishop Matsukage then reassigned him to the Fresno Buddhist Church in Central California.

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (April 1947 - October 1958)

After a short stay in Fresno, Bishop Matsukage telephoned Newton and informed him that Bishop Ryuten Kashiwa of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii was in desperate need of an English-speaking minister. In April 1947, he joined the temple in Honolulu and assisted Bishop Kashiwa in building the English Department. Those were his most productive and memorable years. He also took a short leave of absence to study at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. He studied methods of counseling. One of his lecturers was Carl Rogers.

Upon his return to Hawaii from the seminary, he was appointed as the full-time Executive Secretary of the Hawaii Federation of Young Buddhist Association (YBA) in September 1948. In 1950 he rejoined the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Betsuin as Director of the English Department and editor of the "Goji" its official publication. During his office he served as civilian chaplain for the Armed Forces at official military functions, especially for the interment services of four to five thousand unknown soldiers. These soldiers were buried at the National Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the Punch Bowl. At one of these gatherings, General Douglas MacArthur was in attendance. Newton stated, "The General shook my hand!"

While a youngster living on a sugar plantation, Newton joined the Boy Scouts. Scouting provided an outlet to explore nature as well as eradicate boredom for him. When he was assigned to the temple in Hawaii, he joined the scouting movement with renewed interest. He also sensed that the temple was looking for someone to represent its members on a higher level. "I was asked to climb another level from an institutional representative to an organizational level and extended committee member which met bi-weekly," he remembers. The majority of the members were CEOs of big corporations, but he was the only nonwhite member and only clergyman. The meetings were all opened with prayers, and "I accepted my responsibility," he states. He was given a Boy Scout lapel pin as a committee member, and he accepted it and wore it proudly.

As a Boy Scout leader Newton wore his Scout pin on his lapel faithfully. He wore it to a Bishops' luncheon one day, where he was invited to discuss inter-Buddhist matters among the many Buddhist denominations in Hawaii--Shingon, Nichiren, Zenshu, Higashi and Jodo Shin--all had their own separate bishops. At this luncheon, a guest from Japan, Tamotsu Murayama, who also wore a Scout pin, introduced himself to Newton. They exchanged a Scouter's handshake and engaged themselves in deep conversation. One of the topics was that the Boy Scouts of America recognizes symbols of all established religions. But, there is no Buddhist award, nor was there any Buddhist award for the Boy Scouts of Japan. Both Mr. Murayama and Newton vowed to work on this project to make it happen. After two years of endeavor and almost simultaneously, the Japan Boy Scout Federation approved a "Bukkyo Sho," while the Sangha Award was approved by the Boy Scouts of America. "I felt very grateful to the many scouting leaders of our faith, Through their dedication, this became a reality," he proclaims. The news of the availability of a Buddhist Sangha Award for Boy Scouts was printed in the August 29, 1956 edition of the Pacific Citizen, the official publication of the National

Japanese American Citizens League. Dr. Arthur Schuck, Chief Executive BSA stated: "The Sangha Award is offered by the church to encourage scouts to take an active part in the understanding of the church and to lay a foundation of a worthy life based on firm religious conviction."

In Hawaii, the Island of Maui scout leaders made the initial proposal, which now serves as the basis for the criteria for the Sangha Award. Newton states that the BCA, under the leadership of Dr. Kikuo Taira on the mainland, drew up its own Sangha Award criteria.

As an official of the Hawaii Federation of YBA and a minister of Buddhism, he went to the University of Hawaii at the noon hour to have lunch and talk with the students. He started the Rainbow YBA at the university. This Rainbow YBA is believed to be the precursor of the Buddhist Study Center.

When D.T. Suzuki came to the campus in 1949 to lecture at the East West Philosopher's Conference, Newton was asked to be his secretary and translator. After the conference, Newton was asked to join the University East-West Journal Editorial Board. As a board member he was given the task of critiquing theses sent to the university from students all over the world.

Bishop Matsukage of the BCA had asked Newton to serve in Hawaii for just a few years, but his stay lasted 11 years. During his office at the Hawaii Betsuin Temple he became the first Buddhist chaplain to serve in the Hawaiian Legislature. He also made daily rounds at the civilian hospitals to visit the sick.

Dharma Wheel on Grave Markers of Buddhist Veterans

From the Buddhist Churches of America and the Hongwanji Temples in Hawaii, men and women had donned the uniform of the United States to serve their country during WWII. Some Buddhist ministers volunteered for the chaplain corps but received negative responses. The soldier's name tag usually carries a symbol of one's faith, but for the Buddhist soldier or sailor, there was none.

On August 9, 1951, the remains of two soldiers, who were brothers, were brought home for burial in the Punchbowl. Chaplain Frederick Nichols presided over Sgt. Alfred Ishimoto, age 27; and Rev. Newton Ishiura presided over Pfc. Robert Ishimoto, age 25. On Sgt. Alfred Ishimoto's grave marker, a cross designated his faith, but on Pfc. Alfred Ishimoto's graver maker, that space was blank. Rev. Ishiura was advised that "the Armed Forces does not recognize Buddhism." This reply launched Rev. Ishiura to begin a solo crusade to have this rectified.

While the recognition of the Buddhist faith on grave markers was being launched, simultaneously, the mainlanders formed a medallion committee to have the alphabet "B" for Buddhist placed on the dog tags of Buddhist servicemen. The committee members consisted of Dr. Kikuo Taira, Rev. Kakumin Fujinaga, Manabu Fukuda and Tad Hirota.

They were denied their request. A blue plastic medallion with "I am a Buddhist" was offered to soldiers entering the Armed Services.

Newton approached some veterans organizations to help with the task of getting Buddhist recognition on grave markers, but he found that they were too busy organizing themselves. So he approached Senator Wilfred Tsukiyama, President of the Hawaiian Senate. Senator Tsukiyama in turn introduced Newton to Mr. Joseph R. Farrington, Delegate to Congress from the Territory of Hawaii and publisher of the Honolulu Star Bulletin. Delegate Farrington promised to take this case to Congress, but in the meantime he emphasized contacting the various branches of services in Hawaii. From that day on, a door-to-door one-man campaign was launched. Newton talked with generals and admirals whose headquarters were on the island of Oahu, Schofield Barracks, Hickam Air Force Base, Pearl Harbour Naval Base, Fort Shafter and others. In the meantime, Delegate Farrington was busily negotiating in Washington D.C. Finally in 1958, the Wheel of Life (the symbol for the Eightfold Noble Path) became the official emblem for the deceased veterans of the Buddhist faith. They are now seen on the grave markers at the Punch Bowl and elsewhere.

Marriage (January 1953) and Family

During this time he started corresponding with Mary Matsuura, his wife-to-be. Mary came to visit him in July 1952, in spite of his protest that he was too busy. Mary was working as a social worker in the San Francisco Bay Area. She was an accomplished musician and, also, had earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Rockford College. With a Rose Bowl ticket in his possession in late December 1952, Newton flew to visit Mary in Berkeley. Her mother was away on a trip to Japan. Mary's sisters confronted him with the question, "Do you want to get married to Mary or would you rather go to the Rose Bowl?" He chose to get married.

On January 22, 1953 in a very private ceremony, he and Mary were married in the Berkeley Buddhist Church. The Bishop Enryo Shigefuji officiated the wedding ceremony. In attendance were Dr. and Mrs. Malalasekara of Ceylon and Dr. Alan Watts. Together, bride and groom returned to Hawaii. In Honolulu the couples first three of five children were born. Maya was born on April 24, 1954; Dana on July 2, 1955; and Karma on December 18, 1956. Life was pleasant in Hawaii for him and his family. It was a combination of work and pleasure.

In 1948 Bishop Enryo Shigefuji (1948-58) was newly elected as Bishop of the BCA; he succeeded Bishop Matsukage (1938-48). Bishop Shigefuji envisioned having a dynamic BCA Buddhist Education Department. The Rev. Kenryu Tsuji of Toronto Buddhist Church of Canada was the designated candidate for this department. The Rev. Tsuji insisted that in order for him to accept this position, there must be a replacement for him in Toronto. Thus, began a long negotiation process between Bishop Shigefuji and Newton. Bishop Shigefuji made several trips to Hawaii to persuade Newton to take the position in Toronto. In the end Bishop Shigefuji persuaded Newton to go to Canada. Newton felt obliged, as the Bishop and his father had been good friends. And, Newton,

himself, had some personal stakes in this exchange. He and Rev. Tsuji were schoolmates at Ryukoku University. They had often talked about what kind of work each wanted to do after their ordination.

Toronto Buddhist Church in Toronto, Canada (October 1958 - July 1977)

So, in the fall of 1958 Newton and Mary moved to Toronto, Canada with their three children. Newton recalls that the immigration officers at Malton Airport all shook their heads, when they saw five shivering coolly dressed Hawaiians going through immigration check. Newton states, "It was snowing that day in late October."

"In Canada," he states, "It was Mary who shined, not me." They worked together at the church and on many outside community projects. Mary came to Canada with three children and gave birth to two more. Ananda was born on November 4, 1962 and Asoka was born on November 28, 1964.

In spite of her busy schedule as wife and mother of five children, she managed to play the organ for services, establish a church choir and a church youth symphony orchestra. She took her choir on a tour and the choir sang outside of the New York Buddhist Church, where Newton had held services during WW II. Mary, also, organized the Toronto Dana group, which adopted a Tibetan orphan who was about three-years-old. The group sent money and clothes to this orphan who lived in Dharamsala.

Both Mary and Newton actively participated in assisting the Inuit Indians. The Inuits were experiencing mercury poisoning on their reservation from the nearby manufacturing plant. They joined a group of activists who were able to get the manufacturer to clean up the contaminated land and to prevent such recurrence.

Newton became involved in community outreach work, especially in the area of civil rights and the interfaith community. The Interfaith Committee provided chaplaincy services to the local hospitals. He was granted a chaplain's hospital identification tag. With this tag he was allowed access to the hospital patients' files, specifically those who registered as Buddhists. He could then minister to their needs if they so desired.

Newton also became active in helping to abolish the War Measures Act. This act was set into motion with the outbreak of WWII. The Japanese Canadians were relocated away from coastal areas to inland areas. This Act deprived Japanese Canadian citizens of their civil rights when Canada had declared war on Japan. The Japanese Canadians received their redress and reparation from their government before their counterparts in the U.S.A.

Several years prior to Canada's Centennial celebration in 1967, Newton was a member of the Ontario Interfaith Council (Toronto). Later he became a member of the Canadian Interfaith Centennial Committee. The late Hon. Lester Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada appointed Newton and other distinguished clergymen to represent Canada at

the Centennial Interfaith Service at Westminster Abbey in London, England. Two days before Newton was to depart with the contingent representatives, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Queen's Council communicated to the Prime Minister, that they are not ready to receive a Buddhist clergyman at this auspicious service. This news did devastate the Prime Minister, who conveyed his apologies over the rejection. He, however, made every means possible for Newton to participate in the Canadian Centennial Celebration when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth came to visit Canada. He was invited to the Governor General's residence as one of the official guests. He was introduced to the Queen. At the ceremony he stood just a few feet away from the Queen, and "She nodded a sign of acceptance and reverence to me," he fondly recalls. Later at an informal lounge he had the privilege of talking with Prince Philip for some time.

For the Centennial Celebration Newton contributed a Buddhist "aspiration" to the Centennial Prayer Book, which was used at numerous functions. A massive service was held in front of the parliament building in July 1967, with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in attendance. At this service, he was one of the four clergymen offering "prayer."

Buddhist Churches of Canada (1968)

When Newton was initially assigned to the Toronto Buddhist Church, it was under the auspices of the Buddhist Churches of America. With the formation of the Buddhist Churches of Canada, the two entities were now independent of each other. Both entities are still under the umbrella of the Nishi Hongwanji Temple Headquarters in Kyoto, Japan. Prior to its independence, Newton served one term as "moderator," until he was elected the first Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of Canada in 1968.

The Chief Abbott Kosho Ohtani came from Kyoto, Japan to Canada to officiate at his investiture ceremony. With his election an unprecedented phenomenon occurred in that all three Nishi Hongwanji Bishops in the western hemisphere were also born in the West: Bishop Newton Ishiura of B.C.C., Bishop Kanmo Imamura of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, and Bishop Kenryu Tsuji of B.C.A. Professor Ryugyo Fujimoto of Ryukoku University dispatched an elated letter joyously applauding this development.

When the United Nations celebrated its 25th anniversary, Newton was one of the panelists at its interfaith gathering in the United Nations building in New York City. He shared the podium with Mother Theresa. He enjoyed the chance to talk with her for just over five minutes before and after the forum. His theme was on universality and acceptance. "She praised me for my thoughts of tolerance. I spoke in reverence of her work with the poor and her humility," he reminisces. She held his hands and remarked, "You have warm hands!"

While the people of Canada embraced Newton and Mary and their ministry, Mary's health began to suffer. She was experiencing severe gastric pains with hemorrhage, and was diagnosed with ulcers for which she had to be hospitalized.

Return to Berkeley, Mary's Home (1977)

Bishop Kenryu Tsuji of the B.C.A. gave Newton an assignment close to "home," Mary's home in Berkeley, California in 1977. He was assigned to the Berkeley Buddhist Church near the University of California campus. In Berkeley he reactivated the Berkeley YBA, as he was interested in the young scholars who attended UCB.

The family was now scattered. The three older children Maya, Dana and Karma remained in Canada, and the younger children Ananda and Asoka accompanied their father to Berkeley to join their ill mother. Mary's condition worsened. She was diagnosed with stomach cancer and her prognosis was poor. Mary died on September 26, 1979. This was the saddest day in Newton's life. Now he had to pick up the pieces and start over again.

Florin Buddhist Church (September 1981 - Retirement, December 1994)

Both Newton's parents were now deceased. His father died during WWII (1945) and his mother died after the war (1951). His brother Motomu had died while serving in the Japanese Navy in the Pacific. His brother Sunao is now serving as the head minister of the family temple in Japan. His youngest brother Sadamu is a businessman (now retired) who lives in Hawaii. He came to Florin Buddhist Church on September 1, 1981 with son, Ananda and daughter, Asoka. He remarried twice but both marriages failed and were annulled.

He was assigned to this temple by Bishop Seigen Yamaoka who succeeded Bishop Tsuji. Newton was now 63 years old. His strong passion to make changes in society which he had in his youth had now quieted down. Florin Buddhist Church is located in the suburbs of Sacramento, the capitol of California. He found the church members to be very hard working, loyal and self-contained. Because there is a Sacramento Buddhist Church Betsuin, he felt he should keep his efforts within the Florin Buddhist Church boundaries.

Here, at Florin, it was Asoka who took the initiative to start a couple of programs, which have now been institutionalized. She started the Lumbini Kids, a summer Buddhist day care program. Then, as a student of Sacramento Taiko Dan Sensei, Tiffany Tamaribuchi, she helped to organize the Florin Kodomo Taiko Dan.

After 13 years serving as the minister in residence at Florin Buddhist Church, the Rev. Newton Ishiura decided to retire from active ministry. Bishop Seigen Yamaoka officiated at his retirement service with 14 ministers in attendance. A retirement banquet honoring Newton for his many years of dedicated service as a Jodo Shinshu minister was held at the Red Lion Inn (now Double Tree Inn) on December 18, 1994. Messages from the Governor General of Nishi Hongwanji and the Bishops of Hawaii and Canada were read. Representatives and friends from the New York Buddhist Church, Rainbow YBA and Northern California and Central California of the B.C.A. were in attendance to express their gratitude, present their gifts and to wish him well in retirement.

Newton has made his retirement home in Sacramento. His daughter Maya is married and lives in Canada. His second daughter Dana is a single mother and lives in Canada, also. His son Karma is married with two children and lives in Sacramento. Son Ananda has returned to Canada. Daughter Asoka lives in Sacramento. He has a total of three grandchildren.

The End.

[SESSION 1, September 9, 1997]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

TSUDA: This interview is with Reverend Newton Ishiura. He is a seventy-eight-year-old Kibei¹ man who was born on October 15, 1918 in Kilauea, Hawaii. Today is Tuesday, September 9, 1997. This interview is being conducted in his home on Flintwood Way in Sacramento, California. My name is Hiroko Tsuda and this work is being recorded for the North Central Valley JACL/CSUS Oral History Project. This is Tape 1, Side A.

You have come to America from a family with a long lineage of Buddhist ministers. You are the sixteenth generation Buddhist minister in your distinguished family. You have served with distinction in the Buddhist Churches of America or BCA. You earned your retirement in 1994 after fifty-three years of dedicated service. In your distinguished career, you also served as a Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of Canada for eight years after it became independent of the BCA. For the sake of preserving valuable history of the Japanese who immigrated to North America, I feel very privileged to interview you for this special project. So, let us begin. Where were you born?

¹Kibei: A native U. S. Citizen born of immigrant Japanese parents but educated largely in Japan.

- ISHIURA: I was born in Kilauea, Kauai, Hawaii, 1918.
- TSUDA: Do you remember any story or stories surrounding your birth?
- ISHIURA: Well, I heard about my birth from members when I took a trip to Kauai, oh, from about thirty-forty years ago, but they were insignificant things.
- TSUDA: Did you have a happy childhood?
- ISHIURA: Childhood? I think I had a happy childhood. I had very understanding parents. And my mom [Tsuyu Ishiura] was very very kind to me. In fact, I was closer to her in many ways.
- TSUDA: What were your parents' names, starting with your father and which prefecture in Japan did they live before coming to the United States?
- ISHIURA: My father [Shuken Ishiura] was born as Soken Ishiura, but when he came to Hawaii, the Japanese Foreign Department, I guess, as you know, how you read the kanji,² they read the "So" as "Shu," so legally on his papers--his passport--it says, "Shuken Ishiura." He was from Kumamoto Prefecture in Japan. And my mother's name was Tsuyu. She was a normal school graduate in Japan, a school teacher who. . . . Whether it was a love marriage, I don't know. But they got married in Kauai.
- TSUDA: What were their occupations?
- ISHIURA: Well, my father was a minister of a church, and my mother being the minister's wife during those days, she had the Japanese [language] school. She also taught Japanese sewing. She also taught the ladies--they called it reigi saho, which means etiquette.
- TSUDA: How many siblings did you have--or do you have?

²Kanji: Chinese character

ISHIURA: I had a sister [Mieko] who was three years my senior, and I had three more brothers [Motomu, Sunao, Sadamu]. We all came into this world three years apart.

TSUDA: So what is your birth order then?

ISHIURA: Beg your pardon?

TSUDA: What is your birth order?

ISHIURA: Birth order?

TSUDA: It means what position did you have. Were you the second?

ISHIURA: I was the second--second child.

TSUDA: The second child, but you were the first son? So did that put a lot of pressure on you?

ISHIURA: Not a bit, really. It did not. My parents did not in any way coerce me that I had to follow his [father's] footsteps. But on my own, through my experience, I chose to go into the ministry.

TSUDA: What parental expectations were you aware of? And did you rebel or did you do your best to fulfill them?

ISHIURA: Well, actually, in Hawaii, my friends were Chinese, Hawaiians. I had very few close Japanese friends. And in Japan, being a person born in Hawaii, my Japanese [language] was not good enough to go to school. So my father found a place in the city, called the Kyushu Institute, where there were other Niseis³ attending. And we had a special class. So I went to that class for a while before taking exams for the Kyushu Gakuin⁴ middle school entrance.

³Nisei: A native U. S. or Canadian citizen born of immigrant Japanese parents and educated in America.

⁴Kyushu Gakuin: Private Lutheran Christian School

TSUDA: Okay. We have to go back a little bit, because you're talking now about your life in Japan as a child. But I know in talking to you earlier, you said that you went back briefly to Japan because your father went back when you were two years old. Could you tell us why he had to go back to Japan?

ISHIURA: In the Jodo Shinshu Church ⁵, the eldest son normally takes over the father's position. In my father's case, my grandfather passed away, so he had no choice but to return to Japan to take over the position. And as a young boy at that time, I had no idea what was going on. When I woke up, I was already in Japan.

TSUDA: You don't remember the long boat ride?

ISHIURA: Actually, I don't remember. . . . You know, I remember the farewell party in Pahala, Hawaii, and there was a boat ride for Honolulu--I was sick--all through. And Yokohama, I recall a few things. I went to a barber shop, and it was the first time I held in my hand a Japanese coin. I had no idea of its value, so I told my father I gave three of these. In other words, I gave three fifty-cent coins. Cost of haircut was about thirty cents. So I got pretty bawled out about giving three coins.

TSUDA: So, what school did you attend and at what age did you start?

ISHIURA: From Hawaii?

TSUDA: No, because you were in Japan now.

ISHIURA: In Japan now, yes.

TSUDA: You were there a couple of years?

ISHIURA: Oh, this is the second trip.

TSUDA: Okay. Let's talk about your first trip.

⁵Jodo Shinshu Church: Buddhist Sect

- ISHIURA: The first trip? I was a little boy. Still in my--maybe two years old?
- TSUDA: You're still preschool.
- ISHIURA: Yeah. Preschool. In the preschool years my father returned to Hawaii to a place called Kona.
- TSUDA: This was on the Big Island?
- ISHIURA: That's right. And I went to my first day in preschool at the Konawaena School. The teacher was a hu-u-ge lady, and she terrified me, so I ran home. [Laughter] And I hid under the church.
- TSUDA: The basement.
- ISHIURA: The basement, yeah. That was my first . . .
- TSUDA: Did you go back the next day?
- ISHIURA: I guess the school staff came after me. They searched all over and they found me under the church.
- TSUDA: What is the name of that church?
- ISHIURA: Kona Hongwanji.
- TSUDA: And does it still exist?
- ISHIURA: It's still there.
- TSUDA: And so, what school did you attend there then?
- ISHIURA: I went to Konawaena.
- TSUDA: Is that the elementary school?
- ISHIURA: Yes, yes. And then from there my father was transferred to a place called Pahala. And there I studied in school up to grade eight.
- TSUDA: And what was the name of that school?
- ISHIURA: Pahala. Pahala Elementary School, I think.
- TSUDA: And this was on the Big Island? Hawaii.

ISHIURA: Big Island. Yes.

TSUDA: What happened after that? Where did you go for high school?

ISHIURA: In those days, there was no high school in Pahala. So we had to go to a place called Hilo--about sixty-five miles away to junior high and high school. So I did. I first went to Hilo. They called it Hilo Intermediate School, I think. And my principal was Mr. Oren E. Long, who eventually became the Governor of Hawaii. From there I went to [Inaudible] at Hilo High School. And as a kid, I hated to undress in public. And at Hilo High School we had gym. And I dreaded to do that. And so my father knew the high school football coach. He spoke to him that my son is very shy--doesn't want to go to Phys. Ed. [Physical Education] His name was Mr. Ahfook. And he said, "Well, we need a boy in the locker room. And we can use him. And we will grade him accordingly." And so I became a locker room attendant issuing towels, so I never undressed in my high school year. So in my sophomore year, my father had to go back to Japan, so there I was in Japan in 1935.

TSUDA: Okay. Before we talk about your experience in Japan as a teenager, I'd like to know if you experienced any prejudice for being a Japanese and being a Buddhist in Hawaii?

ISHIURA: In Kona, I don't remember very much. In Pahala, being in school for eight years, it was really a mixed racial school. But the Japanese were predominant. My closest friend in the grade school was a Filipino kid. And I used to go to his house, and I used to eat with them, and he came over. I didn't think about I was Japanese or he was a Filipino. We were just kids. And going to Hilo, it was the same thing, too. In high school,

too. Of course, I didn't take Phys. Ed., but in other areas, I like language. In fact, I was a straight "A" student in Latin and in history. And my friends were all races. And it didn't dawn on me that I am Japanese or he is Chinese. We went back and forth, so I never felt this racial tension in Hawaii. Maybe I was exceptional.

TSUDA: Or maybe because the Japanese are a majority there? Do you think?

ISHIURA: Not in Hilo. They were not the majority.

TSUDA: So, you never took part in sports, then. But were you active in other organizations of the school?

ISHIURA: I was very active in the Latin club and the history club with all kinds of projects together. Sports-wise-- my mom taught me how to play ping pong or table tennis. First, I started ping pong--later I learned how to slam that thing. And she used to call me "hikyo."⁶ But, nevertheless, she introduced me to the game of ping pong. And when I was at Hilo Intermediate School, I took part in inter-island tournament. I went as far as the quarter finals.

TSUDA: So, was there any. . . . Did you date or anything like that when you were in high school?

ISHIURA: You know in high school, I had friends and where I boarded last, I was a young kid, but he used to lend me his car--to fetch his daughter to piano lessons. So on the night of the date--prom night--I think high school, he said, "Take my car." It was a rumble seat car. I took my date and other friends; instead I played ping pong all night.

TSUDA: [Laughter]

ISHIURA: And I came home.

⁶Hikyo: "Cheater"

TSUDA: You didn't dance.

ISHIURA: I think the lady asked me, "How was the date?" "Oh, we forgot!" I had to go back again to get her.

TSUDA: [Laughter] So what was her reaction to how you treated her?

ISHIURA: Oh, she was a nice kid. Very nice kid.

TSUDA: So, you said, earlier that at age fourteen, you went--your father went back to Japan. What was the occasion that he had to return again?

ISHIURA: Well, he was the oldest son of the temple and it was an obligation for him to return to Kumamoto to become the head minister there. And there, I realized that I am now in Japan. I was so confused. Really confused.

TSUDA: So you were having a cultural shock. You are American, not Japanese . . .

ISHIURA: Language wise, culture shock. Yes, and also to feel that I, gee, I'm here in Japan, all the way from Hawaii. And that was to me, something very hard to understand, until one day I had to go to somewhere to learn the Japanese language. I spent a few weeks in the grammar school with the little kids. I felt awful there. And then my father found a school in the city where there were some kids from Canada, Hawaii, U.S., and Brazil, learning the Japanese language for the first time. So I enrolled in that particular school.

TSUDA: Do you remember the name of that school?

ISHIURA: Kyushu Gakuin.

TSUDA: And how long were you there before you mainstreamed into the Japanese school?

ISHIURA: Well, I was there for maybe over six or seven months in that particular school--in the class. And I knew that I had to go into the mainstream, so I really buckled down to study, and I passed the entrance examination. And

I became the--in those days the Chugakko⁷ was five years--and I enrolled into the fourth grade, so I spent two years there. And graduated in the fifth year in 1938.

TSUDA: From the high school?

ISHIURA: Yes.

TSUDA: Okay, from the high school. And what were your ambitions after that?

ISHIURA: Actually when I was at Kyushu Gakuin--this was a Lutheran-related institution. There were two missionaries, one from Minnesota, the other one from Pennsylvania, I think. Every morning we had a prayer session for the whole student body. Besides that, there were other club activities; there was one called the White Sheep Society--a prayer group. I became interested in this one, and I enjoyed this group. In the meantime, one day while walking in the streets, I saw a poster saying that a famous evangelist Toyohiko Kagawa was coming into town for an evangelical retreat. I heard about this man before, and I thought I would go listen to him. After his long oration, I really was touched by his methodology, his involvement in the slum district--bringing the Gospel to the slum district. And so after his talk I went backstage to meet him. And he was impressed by my coming back to see him, and he told me that, "It seems you are interested in the whole Christian movement. You are now at Kyushu Gakuin. Why don't you join this prayer group?" Which I did. I was very impressed by Kagawa's intention, his evangelical zeal, his feeling for the poor, and so I thought I wanted to follow his footsteps. And so, in fact, actually I was baptized at this school. I wanted eventually to go to one of the seminaries

⁷Chugakko: Junior High School

in Osaka or Tokyo. But then things have changed since then. There were many, many problems/questions which arose, and my professors/teachers at the seminary were unable to answer.

TSUDA: Such as what? What was that?

ISHIURA: Oh, about prayer, about God, salvation. These were very pressing problems. So I thought, well, maybe I should go back and ask my father these questions. Of course, my father and I didn't have the best relations because it goes way back to his discipline. But then I decided that I had to get these answers. So I went to his temple. I asked my father if he has some time? And he said he has time. So we went to the back of the temple where his library was. And I asked simply questions, that in my dealings at the Kyushu Gakuin, the special committee, the preachers and the prayers, would be that unless you believe in God, unless it is the prayer which is the link between salvation--now what do you think? And he told me--at that moment, his whole mien changed into very soft and amiable. And he told me in a very very simple way that in Jodo-Shinshu, that is his tradition, "Amidasama⁸ is not someone we seek. He is all over me--all over you. So you don't have to seek salvation, because his way is that the minute you were born, you were already in the bosom of his salvation. You don't have to seek him. He is seeking you." Oh, that answer was a tremendous ease on my part. And so, I went back to school. I continued my education. But in the meantime, my father's behavior toward me, his attitude--I respected it. And, also, I felt that there must be something good in Jodo-Shinshu. And so in the meantime, even after I was given a special scholarship to go

⁸Amidasama: Amida Buddha

to the states, I thought maybe I should pursue where my father went. One day I told my mom that I would like to go to Kyoto to the Ryukoku University⁹ to study. My mother was very thrilled. My father was, you know, lackadaisical. But, nevertheless, that's where I made my decision to go to Ryukoku University to study.

TSUDA: How old were you then when you made that decision?

ISHIURA: I was about eighteen then.

TSUDA: I think earlier in our informal conversation you had said that you were given a scholarship to go to Amherst [College]. And that's when you decided to talk to your dad.

ISHIURA: About that time I was having my problems. And I had my conversation with my father.

TSUDA: So your father never coerced you to become a Buddhist minister following his footsteps.

ISHIURA: In fact when I told my father I would like to take the Seminary course, I thought he was a Kendo¹⁰ man--you know, a tough man. He normally would have just banged you or hit you, but he didn't say a word. He said, "Well, I'll pay your tuition."

TSUDA: When you said that, was it to go to Amherst? Or to Ryukoku?

ISHIURA: When I told him I'd like to go to Kyushu Gakuin to study Christianity, he was totally indifferent. And he will pay my tuition. My mother was hysterical.

TSUDA: So, he did follow through, and you went to this Kyushu Gakuin. For how many years?

⁹Ryukoku University: Seminary division of Jodo-Shinshu

¹⁰Kendo: Japanese fencing

- ISHIURA Until my graduation. So this is from '35 to '38.
- TSUDA: Oh, for three years. Was that equivalent to a high school?
- ISHIURA High school, yes.
- TSUDA: And so then after you were graduated, then you went to enroll at Ryukoku University where your dad was graduated from.
- ISHIURA Actually, my dad went to Takanawa University in Tokyo, which is now defunct, and that became, eventually, Ryukoku University.
- TSUDA: Oh, I see, and it moved its headquarters to Kyoto, then.
- ISHIURA They also said you can't have it in Tokyo. Then you'll have more liberal ministers today. That's what he also said.
- TSUDA: Is he still alive?
- ISHIURA: No, he died in 1945.
- TSUDA: So when did you take kendo?
- ISHIURA Well, from grammar school days. Every day.
- TSUDA: In Hawaii?
- ISHIURA In Hawaii, yes. So, I was pretty good, but I refused to take the examination. I used to have matches with nidan¹¹. I used to beat them. But I remained a white belt because I rebelled, because of my hate for my kendo--for my father. But I took it because I had to.
- TSUDA: That's one of the expectations that your dad had of you, then?
- ISHIURA: Well, you see, he wanted to make me a man's man, I think. I was not that kind of man.
- TSUDA: You were more philosophical, you think, rather than physical man?
- ISHIURA: I'm very sensitive and very soft.

¹¹Nidan: Second level.

TSUDA: Okay, so now you are at Ryukoku University. Were most of your studies Buddhism? Or was it more of a liberal education? What was the education like?

ISHIURA: Well, the department I entered was more "shinshuology"¹² department. But I always felt that I should have other courses or other activities to go along with it. And luckily, as I recall today, my mother thought about my career. And before I left Kumamoto, she gave me two letters. One was addressed to the school of-- what do you call it--ballet. The other was a voice professor at the women's college. At that time I was angry because when I went to the ballet school, they were all girls--young girls between the ages of 7 to about 15. I was the only male there. But after I learned why she sent me there, I was very grateful and voice lessons too . . .

TSUDA: Okay, let's go back a little bit. Why--what insight did you get about your mother sending you there?

ISHIURA: Well, it was during my vacation, when I went back in three months, I was really angry at my mother. And after listening to her, she said, she always pictures a minister--a monk--priest at the altar who is graceful, knows how to handle his body at the altar--even to light the candle. She told me, we used to do this. "I don't want you to be really. . . . I see many, many other ministers" she encountered by experience "who are very clumsy, doing those things, but I wanted a son who is very graceful at the altar." And she told me, "Ballet will help you to do that. Same thing in voice training--the minister can use his voice for okyo,¹³ reading sutras, in giving sermons--very important part of your whole life, and having a voice training can help

¹²Shinshuology: Study of Jodo Shinshu religion

¹³Okyo: Buddhist chanting of sutras

you." And so, I think my mother had all this thought in mind that for the first time her only son--first son--is able to go through this process to become a man or minister with grace.

TSUDA: So, after you returned to Japan then, you had three more brothers?

ISHIURA: Three brothers.

TSUDA: Okay. Could you tell us about your sister. Her name and how old was she when she died, and about your brothers right now.

ISHIURA: I knew I had a sister, and her name was Mieko, three years older than I am, but I had no recollection of her. When I went to Sacramento City College, I took a course on trying to write an autobiography. In the course it said, try to reflect as early as possible. But I had no one to talk to so I spent many, many days reflecting on my life. It was a strange coincidence that while reflecting one night, I could smell the sea breeze¹⁴. And I wondered, "How come?" Well, the sea breeze was of Kona. After my father returned to Japan, when I was about two years old, and he returned to Hawaii again to Kona. In Kona, the boat has to dock away from the pier. And on a small boat it would take us out to the pier. And it was early morning that I can remember we went down the gangplank and one of those big Hawaiian longshoremen was carrying me down to the small boat. And I could whiff--the sea smell came. And then what I thought of was about my sister. I pictured her. I found a picture, yes, but I recall some stories about her taking care of me. It was a winter, I know, that there was snow around the temple grounds. I remember carrying the snow and smacking it against my sister. All these things revived in me. And so my revival sense of my

¹⁴Kunjuku, a Buddhist psychological term for subconsciousness that reflects past experience.

sister was that she was a very kind sister who took good care of me. Of course, all the three brothers were born--we lived together, so . . .

TSUDA: But she died you said. At age five?

ISHIURA: I don't remember when she died, but from my parents, they told me that they were at my mother's house in the country. . .

TSUDA: In Kona?

ISHIURA: In Kumamoto. And contracted the disease, and there were no doctors around, and no ice around, and so she passed away.

TSUDA: Yes, and you said, maybe it was encephalitis?

ISHIURA: Maybe five years. Age five, I guess.

TSUDA: And then your brother, Motomu, was born in Japan before your father returned to Kona, Hawaii.

ISHIURA: Yes, that's right.

TSUDA: And what are their names and how old are they now and what are they doing?

ISHIURA: The second one's name is Motomu, three years younger. In Japan he went to Meiji University, but while he was there he was drafted and he was in the Japanese Navy. And he died in action in 1944. He was a Commander in the Navy--in the Naval Air Force. The next brother is called Sunao. He is now in Japan. And he took over the temple because I refused to be there. And my youngest is Sadamu. He is in Hawaii. He is retired and living in Hawaii.

TSUDA: Okay, so what is his occupation?

ISHIURA: He was working for a supermarket chain, and he retired many years ago.

TSUDA: So now we're back to when you were eighteen. Did your brothers have to take kendo also?

ISHIURA: In school, my second brother took up judo. And while he was in middle school-- high school-- he was the fourth belt holder. Black belt--that's tough. And the third did a little kendo, and my youngest--he had a second degree black belt in judo, I think.

TSUDA: Maybe right now is the time to tell the story how kendo helped you . . .

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

TSUDA: . . . not become injured in your eye.

ISHIURA: You know, in Hawaii, I dreaded coming home, because my father was there with all those stuff to practice. In the beginning it was fascinating. But in the meantime, that fascination became hateful when I was learning it, and pretty soon I transferred my hate to my father. And so all those years, because of kendo--my transfer of hate to my father--I don't remember saying "Thank you" to him. In Japan I know there were many opportunities and my mother often told me, "Just say 'Thank you.' Just say 'thank you.'" But I never did. In 1941--it was in July, I took a boat--Japanese boat, *Tatsuta Maru*, from Kobe for San Francisco.

TSUDA: Why did you come then? Who urged you to come?

ISHIURA: Well, actually, when I was in Kyoto, because I guess I was American born, because I was very tall--I don't know. Somehow, my name was in the police thought-control book. And every three months I had to go to the police station to report of my activities. I realized they knew exactly who I

was then. But to concur--my confession--in their book, I had to go every three months to the police station. And whenever I traveled, I knew there was somebody tailing me. And this was my life.

TSUDA: This was because you were an American in Japan?

ISHIURA: In Japan, I guess. And also, I was not really for war itself. I talked about disarmament, not openly to people, but I guess someone heard me. In fact, it was 1940 in Tokyo, there was an all-Nisei conference. There were all those speakers. And in the group, they were not spies, but they were from the [police] department to listen to what I was speaking. And that night I was called into the Tokyo police station. And they said, "Today, you said, so-and-so." I said so and so but, you have to listen to the whole text. But anyway, they thought I was an anti-Japanese thinker. And I guess all of these things were the causes for the interviews. And so one of my friends at the American Consulate in Osaka warned me that "The guys are after you. If I were you, I would take the first boat back." And so I went to discuss it with my parents, and we made arrangements. Within a month I got all my papers together. So in July, I was on a boat back to San Francisco. But that night on the boat between Kobe and Yokohama, all night long I was questioned by the Japanese team. They'd come about three or four, and in one hour, a new team comes. All night long, the same questions--trying to trick me. But I got by all right. And I'm glad I am back here.

TSUDA: But what would have happened if you said the wrong thing?

ISHIURA: Well, I guess, I wouldn't be able to come back. And I realized what they do to people--many, I understand, were in jail--in prison during the wartime.

TSUDA: Before we continue on with your return to America. . . . In the 1930s--they were known as the depression years--I presume that you were in Hawaii, still?

ISHIURA: In Hawaii, yes.

TSUDA: And did your family and yourself suffer financially during those years?

ISHIURA: Actually, you know, I don't think we really suffered, because, you know, being in a minister's family, the stipend was very meager, and my mother was very clever. She can make something out of nothing. And she made many stuff at home. In fact, where I lived, there was no tofu¹⁵ company. But she got the sesame seed and she made sesame seed tofu. And she was able to make something out of nothing. And so I didn't feel any pinch in those years.

TSUDA: Did she come from a distinguished family, also?

ISHIURA: Well, her family comes from a sakaya¹⁶, the sake¹⁷ industry, but during her time, the sake company was the elitist family. Her father was a scholar who taught calligraphy, taught classics and owned a sake company.. And so, she was reared as a real ojosan¹⁸ and was sent to the best schools in Japan. She was literate. She read many magazines and books.

TSUDA: Did she ever complain of the hardship she endured in coming to America?

ISHIURA: She never did, you know. She never did. She never complained at all.

¹⁵Tofu: Soybean cake

¹⁶Sakaya: Japanese rice wine manufacturer

¹⁷Sake: Japanese rice wine

¹⁸Ojosan: A well-bred young lady

- TSUDA: So, now, let's go back to when you came back to Hawaii. And where did you land, and where did you start making a living?
- ISHIURA: Now this is as an adult?
- TSUDA: As an adult after you graduated from Kyushu.
- ISHIURA: I first came back to San Francisco.
- TSUDA: Oh, wait. You graduated from Ryukoku University, now, right? How old were you then?
- ISHIURA: Oh, I was about--not quite twenty two.
- TSUDA: And then you came back to the United States in 1941 before World War II.
- ISHIURA: Before World War II. Yes.
- TSUDA: And so you went to San Francisco, and now you're a full minister?
- ISHIURA: I was, yes. I got my degree before I left Japan.
- TSUDA: And so you reported to BCA? Or it wasn't even called BCA then?
- ISHIURA: Buddhist Church of North America. Or North American Buddhist Mission.
- TSUDA: Do you remember who the Bishop was?
- ISHIURA: Bishop Ryotai Matsukage.
- TSUDA: And what did he advise you?
- ISHIURA: And Rev. Kenryo Kumata was there--the Secretary.
- TSUDA: And what did they advise you when you asked for a job?
- ISHIURA: I went because I had the papers from Japan with Rev. Masuyama's reference. And they said, "Well," first they told me, "However, we have no position for you." That's it. And I was shocked. And I thought if I had to go to Compton and ask my uncle, "Can I stay here?" That was July, 1941.
- TSUDA: And so he had a restaurant there, and you worked . . .

ISHIURA: He owned a place called "Compton Chop Suey." And I didn't want to live off on him, so I asked my Auntie Yuki, "Can I do anything?" Well, she said, "You can get up in the morning and peel two sacks of onions and wait on tables." So I did it for awhile until late August, I think.

TSUDA: Did your eyes ever get used to all that?

ISHIURA: Well, I learned how to soak the onions in water and then peel it.

TSUDA: So, what is your uncle and aunt's names?

ISHIURA: Okamura. Akira Okamura.

TSUDA: Are they still there?

ISHIURA: He passed away. Did you know that, on my mother's side, every member of the family and relatives died on the tenth day of the month? My mom died April 10th. My uncle died August 10th. All tenth. So for a while my auntie wrote to me about that. And when the tenth day comes I was really nervous. But anyway, he died the year my wife died--in 1979. And the next month my wife died.

TSUDA: So, we haven't gotten to your marriage yet [Laughter]. Okay, so, after that--is it time now to talk about your marriages or to talk about your assignment. Because, I think, maybe we should talk about your assignment . . .

ISHIURA: Assignment because I had no intention of marrying at that time. So, in Los Angeles, Rev. Kow came after me. I was really shocked that . . .

TSUDA: What was the reason that he came after you? Was this after Pearl Harbor? Or before Pearl Harbor?

ISHIURA: No, before Pearl Harbor.

TSUDA: What happened that he asked you . . .

ISHIURA: Bishop Ryotai [Matsukage] refused me a job. And, I guess, he phoned him that there was a guy named Ishiura floating around somewhere. So they found me at this place. And to offer me a position.

TSUDA: And it was because the ministers that were there were gathered up by the FBI?

ISHIURA: No, not yet. They were all there.

TSUDA: They were still there.

ISHIURA: There were ten, I guess in Los Angeles at that time. He needed another help, so I went there.

TSUDA: So you went there. And did you actually get a job there, then?

ISHIURA: Yes, I was there. The very next day, I was there with all my--I had one yanagi gori.¹⁹ And that's all I had. I went there. And that's the old Betsuin, which is now the National Japanese Museum²⁰. And I lived upstairs in the building.

TSUDA: And you served there until Pearl Harbor?

ISHIURA: No, at the end of September, about two months, I think. In 1941.

TSUDA: Oh, in '41. And then . . .

ISHIURA: And then Rev. [Jokai] Kow told me, "A good church." you know--available. "And I'm giving you the first chance. Are you ready to go?" I said, "Sure, I'll go anywhere." It was Bakersfield. And I went to the Bakersfield Buddhist Church on the train. I got off and I thought there would be someone to meet me, but no one was there. So I asked people around there, "Where is this address?" I walked to this church. It was a

¹⁹Yanagi gori: A willow basket suitcase.

²⁰The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in the old Nishi Hongwanji Temple Building, 369 East First Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

wooden structure. I waited on the steps to dusk until somebody came. An old fellow came, and in his Issei way, he said, "You ga new bonsan ka?" I thought, "Wow, what language!" I can learn a new language here.

TSUDA: So interpreted, that was, "Are you the new minister here?" This is for the sake of the oral history. And then, what happened?

ISHIURA: "You ga new bonsan ka?" was a strange language for me. My mom told me . . .

TSUDA: Well, that wasn't very polite language.

ISHIURA: My mother was against using "me" and "you" in conversation. And everything against my mother's admonishment and advice.

TSUDA: And so you started on the wrong foot, there. Or you felt that they started you on the wrong foot . . .

ISHIURA: I was glad I got a position, though.

TSUDA: And so did you actually conduct services there?

ISHIURA: Oh, yes. A few days later, there was a funeral. I never did one alone before. Intellectually, I know the order. But, strangely, I felt emotionally I was not ready for it. So I called Los Angeles. "Taihen da!"²¹ What happens with a funeral?" Rev. Okita drove all the way up to help me with the funeral. And we got through the whole thing. And so about 10:00 o'clock he left for Los Angeles. And that night, after everything was all finished, about to close up, and the casket was still in the church. And I stopped the mortician. "You forgot something--the casket." [He said] "No, the custom here is we leave it overnight." I said, "No, no, no. There is a new order here. You take it all." I was afraid, you know? [Laughter] So I started a

²¹Taihen da: "Oh, my!" or "Great Scot!"

new tradition here to take the whole thing out, because I lived next door across the hallway.

TSUDA: Was the Bakersfield Buddhist Church part of the L.A. Betsuin, then?

ISHIURA: No, no. It was independent.

TSUDA: It was independent.

ISHIURA: Because I was in need of help.

TSUDA: Oh, because you were in need of a job, you were assigned there. Did you get to become acquainted with the congregation there?

ISHIURA: Oh very much so. There were fifteen families. I used to know the whole family. The kids, too. And I had to teach Japanese language school, too, every afternoon. So, I got to know the parents and the whole family. And at night, I had a special study session with the older kids--homework. And after [parents] came after the young ones, I used to go bowling. I once bowled a 300 game. Just once.

TSUDA: You did! Congratulations!

ISHIURA: Just once. And I had to go to a place on weekends to a place called Taft, about sixty miles away. You know, the car they gave me had no window. You had to attach from the outside. And the windshield wiper was manual. This way. [Laughter] And between Bakersfield and Taft, it rains often. And when it rains, I have to get out of the car and put all those things on. And by the time I'm finished, I'm all drenched. That was my car, but what a fun car, though.

TSUDA: So it was a convertible, when it wasn't raining, then.

ISHIURA: It had a roof, and it was open.

TSUDA: So you snapped the canvas-type covers on. Very interesting.

And then, so you were still single. And were you invited to families for dinner, then?

ISHIURA: Oh, my! I used to get dinner almost every night, where there was a young lady. But, I had no feelings about getting married at 22 years old.

TSUDA: So did you become a good cook?

ISHIURA: Because I was invited out so often, my 'fridge was--I had pineapple juice and olives--that was all I had.

TSUDA: [Laughter] And then the war started?

ISHIURA: That was in 1941, yes. On the way, that morning I was on my way to Los Angeles--on the hill--by the "grapevine."²² I was stopped by the CHP [California Highway Patrol]. And I got out and he frisked me and everything. He asked me--a huge guy--he asked me, "I want to see your passport." And I had to give a quick answer--a good answer. And so I asked him, "Do you carry a passport?" He said, "Hell, no, I'm an American citizen." I said, "So am I. You don't carry a passport. Why should I carry a passport?" And I got by. And up to that moment I was afraid of huge non-Asians.

[Long pause for change of tape during the original taping.]

TSUDA: Okay this is Tape 1, Side B.

Oh, you know what? Excuse me. But it wasn't--now it's recording.

Okay, I'm sorry I have to do this over but, so now you were able to rescue yourself from this policeman, and you were released and you went to L.A. Betsuin.

²²The north end of the Tehachapi Mountains between Bakersfield and Los Angeles was named the "grapevine" for the treacherous and extremely winding incline where many accidents occurred.

ISHIURA: Well, according to the Bishop's telephone call, all assigned ministers at the L.A. Betsuin were arrested and they were in jail in Tujunga.²³

TSUDA: And that was the assembly center for them? Or it was a regular jail?

ISHIURA: Tujunga was a regular jail. And I went to see them eventually. They had striped shirts, you know. And number in front.

TSUDA: Number? Oh. And so they were actually treated as prisoners.

ISHIURA: Yes.

TSUDA: Oh, I see. And they were separated from their families?

ISHIURA: Families, yes.

TSUDA: So, how long were you at the L.A. Betsuin? Did you have to go to camp?

ISHIURA: When I was assigned there, I went there sometime in March, 1942. And by the end of April we had to evacuate to Santa Anita--so very shortly.

TSUDA: And so you were still a bachelor then?

ISHIURA: Oh, yes.

TSUDA: And what happened after that?

ISHIURA: In camp, within a month or six weeks, I think, I became ill with tuberculosis and they sent me to a place called Hillcrest Sanitarium in La Crescenta, which is in the San Fernando Valley. And when I went there, from my bedroom window, at night I saw a light way down below. I asked the truck driver, "What is that light over there?" He told me that's a place called Tujunga where there are many Japanese jailbirds in there, and that's where the ministers were.

²³ "WW II with its evacuation of all Japanese, Issei and Nisei alike, temporarily closed down the Betsuin. All but two of the Betsuin ministers and many of the board members were interned soon after the outbreak of the war. They were interned not because they were Buddhist ministers, but because they were on the staffs of the Japanese schools operated by the Betsuin. The two ministers not interned were Rev. Reichi Mori and Rev. Julius Goldwater. Rev. Mori was later evacuated to Heart Mountain but Rev. Goldwater stayed in Los Angeles for the duration of the war taking care of the Betsuin property." --*Buddhist Churches of America, Vol. 1, 75 Year History 1899-1974, Chicago, Norbart, Inc. 1974.*

- TSUDA: Oh, were you allowed to go visit them even with the tuberculosis?
- ISHIURA: No, I was very sick. I couldn't go. But they were still there.
- TSUDA: And you said there were about 168 Japanese. . .
- ISHIURA: In the sanitarium.
- TSUDA: . . . Americans there that were assembled there from ten other relocation camps who had tuberculosis?
- ISHIURA: Yes, that's right.
- TSUDA: And so, how did you minister to their needs?
- ISHIURA: Well, I was a patient in the beginning. And until I became well, they called it "ambulatory patient," then I thought I wanted to do something with my life, and so I asked to go to various wards with my pajama on. Some of them will greet me well, and others cared less. And so I thought, well, if I had another kind of attire. In the meantime I got to know the Maryknoll²⁴ Fathers pretty well. And I told the Father I need that stuff here--you know, that white collar. [He said,] "Sure." The next day he brought me one my size. I wore it. I went to the wards. Wow, they sit up in bed, you know.
- TSUDA: They thought you were a Catholic minister?
- ISHIURA: No. They knew I was a Buddhist minister.
- TSUDA: [Laughter] But you were dressed much more respectfully. And so they gave you . . .
- ISHIURA: Attention.
- TSUDA: . . . attention and respect. Okay.
- And so, what kind of medicine did they give you while you were there to get you well?

²⁴Maryknoll: Catholic church in Los Angeles

ISHIURA: Actually, first one was pneumothorax which is to pump air into the pleural cavity to stabilize your lungs. And in the beginning I didn't want any of that. Medication, I had none. In fact, two or three years after I went to the sanitarium, the doctor and nurse told me that Olive View is the main tubercular sanitarium in downtown Los Angeles. They can do a quick job there--that is, to remove all my right breast.

TSUDA: Flatten your lungs, I guess.

ISHIURA: No, I have no idea at all. I asked one of the patients about it. I was told to do that operation. What happened next, he told me, "Look at that guy over there." I saw him walking like this. I said, "No, not that!" So I told my nurse that in time--maybe a week--maybe a month. So she gave me about six weeks to do something. And so six weeks I was flat on my back with a sand bag. I didn't move. And within five weeks they took me down to Olive View for X-rays, and my whole diseased cavities were all gone. And I came back and next day the nurse--the head nurse-- came down. She was excitedly happy. "It's a miracle! It's a miracle! What happened?" she said. "All your cavities are gone! You are almost cured!" So when I heard her elation, I was very happy for me. But I said, "Well, you may call it a miracle, but that's nembutsu²⁵ doing everything." "What did you say?" So everyday she came to me and we went into her office and she listened to my Buddhist interpretation of life. And in the meantime, I thought I wanted to do something for the others, too. And I met a few of the Catholics and the Protestants, you know. "We don't have any Sunday Services. Would you like to have one done?" "Yes, can you help us?" So

²⁵Nembutsu: Jodo-Shinshu meditation. The central focus of JodoShinshu Buddhism. It is considered the essence of Buddha Dharma

I organized an interfaith Sunday morning worship and twenty, thirty, forty, came to my service. I had--we sang Christian hymns. I read the prayer from denomination books. I had okyo and sermon every Sunday, on non-denominational approach.

TSUDA: So it was an ecumenical service that people enjoyed. So, these 168 Japanese American internees--were they allowed to go back and forth? Were they under guard?

ISHIURA: We had a fence all around--no one could get out of there.

TSUDA: Oh, I see. So were you discharged from this sanitarium?

ISHIURA: Well, when you are well, they discharge you. And you can go back to the camp.

TSUDA: Which camp? Did you go back to another camp?

ISHIURA: I just debated whether I should go to the "free zone"²⁶ or not. Well, after over a year, you know, you're not very sure. So I thought maybe if I go to another camp, I could rest for awhile. And so I thought, well, I know a family in Gila River. And so I went to Gila River. That's where the--Mary's [Matsuura] family was there.

TSUDA: And this is Arizona?

ISHIURA: That's right.

TSUDA: And this is Mary, your future wife.

ISHIURA: And I wore the clergy collar. Next day, I went to her house, and her sister came out, and her mom came out.

TSUDA: And that's how you met?

ISHIURA: I saw her, but never knew . . .

²⁶Free zone: Geographical areas away from the West Coast where Japanese-Americans could relocate during WW II.

TSUDA: How did you meet her?

ISHIURA: Actually, I was going out with another girl friend. This was a little later on.

TSUDA: This was while you were at L.A. Betsuin?

ISHIURA: No, in. . . I didn't really go. I had a crush on another girl I met when she visited in Hawaii. But in our letters, we did not see eye to eye on what marriage is. Then she told me she had a good friend. And that was Mary. And so she became--we wrote back and forth.

TSUDA: What's Mary's last name?

ISHIURA: Matsuura.

TSUDA: And how old is she now?

ISHIURA: She's four years younger. So she would be seventy four.

TSUDA: And this is your first wife?

ISHIURA: Yes.

TSUDA: Okay.

ISHIURA: If she didn't come to Hawaii to see me, whether I would be married, I don't know.

TSUDA: Okay, so you were in Gila River, you met Mary who was to become your first wife. And what did you do for a living then? I mean you have to earn something.

ISHIURA: Well, in Gila River, I didn't stay very long. So my first job was at the University of Michigan.

TSUDA: Oh, so you decided to go out, then?

ISHIURA: To do something.

TSUDA: Because you read something about they needed a Japanese to . . .

ISHIURA: They wanted someone to help with the dictionary compilation. And so Professor Joseph Yamagiwa was the head of the project. And I went, and I didn't feel that it was going to work out right with him. And in the meantime, Yale University had an opening, and so I went there. I was very happy there.

TSUDA: Okay, and what was the opening for?

ISHIURA: Instructor in the Army Specialized Training Program as an instructor.

TSUDA: And what did you teach?

ISHIURA: I taught the Japanese language, and I, also, sometimes in the seminar group, we talked about how Japanese act and react, and all this psychology. And also I couldn't enroll but I took up Sanskrit at the University.

TSUDA: Did you give them other extra curricular activity, so they could learn the Japanese language and culture . . .

ISHIURA: All I did was for my classroom to make the language alive. I used to have a Japanese baseball broadcast--I used to broadcast baseball in the Japanese language. And also, I did plays for the students which had a very tremendous effect on their language skills, because they had to act and feel the Japanese language.

TSUDA: And what accommodations did you have to put on these plays?

ISHIURA: Well, for one thing, a new field for me. My student Douglas Burns was a Broadway actor before he was drafted, so I worked with him. And we thought language is the best means to teach language. In the meantime, while we were rehearsing we were looking for a place, and someone said, "You know, there's a School of Drama." I went there and I proposed what

I'm going to do, and the director says, "This is your house." He opened the whole place for me. So I was able to use the best facilities for the play.

TSUDA: And how long were you there?

ISHIURA: Three years. But to get the costumes, I had to go to New York to the Japanese families to borrow kimonos and everything like that. I found a lady to dress them up, and a man made geta²⁷ for us.

TSUDA: So, when the war ended, when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, were you still there at the school? [Doorbell rang.] So, most of your war years were spent there, then, at the Yale University Army Specialized Training Program. That's in Connecticut?

ISHIURA: Yes, New Haven, Connecticut.

TSUDA: New Haven, Connecticut. Did you have any prejudice against you or any feelings like that while you were there?

ISHIURA: At the University surroundings, I experienced no prejudice, you know, I was accepted wherever I went. I never experienced that prejudice.

TSUDA: So you were leading pretty much a bachelor life then?

ISHIURA: I was a happy-go-lucky bachelor.

TSUDA: So Mary was still in camp then? Or did she come out?

ISHIURA: Well, let me see now. About that time, I think, she went to Rockford, Illinois to school--Rockford College. That, I learned later on.

TSUDA: Did she become a teacher or a nurse, or . . .

ISHIURA: After she finished school, she was a social worker in the Bay Area [San Francisco Bay Area].

²⁷Geta: Wooden clogs

- TSUDA: So did you correspond with your parents during the war? They were still in Japan, and here you were in America?
- ISHIURA: They told me I could use the Red Cross. But I never did. I never did!
- TSUDA: So your dad served still as the minister of this family church--family temple, and your mom, I guess, was probably a housewife and teaching also. So did you have contact with your brothers?
- ISHIURA: Not at all. Not till after the war.
- TSUDA: Were they angry with you for coming to America and leaving them behind?
- ISHIURA: They considered my safety. If I were in Japan, the government . . .
- TSUDA: Would get you. So they were for you then, to coming to the U.S.
- ISHIURA: I think so.
- TSUDA: And so, now going back to August 6th when the first atomic bomb was dropped, what were you doing at the time?
- ISHIURA: I was at Yale University, and I was going for my mail to the Yale Station to get my mail. And I went to class. And the morning the bomb dropped, I was in my dormitory, getting ready for school. And every morning I turn on the radio for news. And I heard news from Tinian Island about bomber B-29 being blessed by a chaplain for takeoff.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

- ISHIURA: And they told me that, you know, it looks like we dropped a big bomb somewhere. They didn't know. My students were Colonels or Generals in the Army. And the next day they told me it was the atomic bomb--how big it was. Some said, "Oh." And some said "Oh." Too mixed emotions. I was caught in between. I didn't want to say anything.

- TSUDA: How did things end then? Did you continue to teach Japanese or what?
- ISHIURA: I was there until '46.
- TSUDA: Until the end of '46? Another year after the war ended. And then, what kind of assignment did you have?
- ISHIURA: Well, the program ended in '46. And I was thinking about what to do next. I had a chance to go to Hawaii if I wanted to. And while I was doing that, Bishop Matsukage asked me to come back to California, to Fresno as the minister. Well, I thought, good idea, so I packed and went to Fresno. This was in December of 1946.
- TSUDA: And living in the metropolis, and then going to a country ministry, did that affect you in any way?
- ISHIURA: It affected me this way. I am really a civil libertarian--a civil rightist movement--getting involved. And I talked about those things in my sermons too. And somehow, I don't think it went well with them. In fact, Central California is very conservative.
- TSUDA: So you were more liberal in your philosophical . . .
- ISHIURA: I was not in line with their thinking.
- TSUDA: And were they trying to survive--basic survival was their goal at that time.
- ISHIURA: But I'm glad, because Hawaii, was trying to get me. Rev. Kashiwa was trying all he can to get me to Hawaii until Bishop Matsukage told me that Hawaii really needs someone like you. And I said, "I prefer to be here." Bishop Matsukage said, "Four or five years, go to Hawaii and come back." So actually it was his assignment to me to go to Hawaii.
- TSUDA: So you didn't stay at Fresno very long then?

ISHIURA: Less than a half a year.

TSUDA: So you went to Hawaii to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. And what was your duty there?

ISHIURA: I was to head up the English Department. Also, in the meantime I developed the chaplaincy at the hospitals; and then the community outreach to the Boy Scouts and Armed Forces, that type of thing.

TSUDA: And what are the memorable contributions that you have made while you were there?

ISHIURA: Well, I think that one thing was to Anglicize the services--more compatible. Also, I tried, but they didn't continue after I left, to eliminate the chairman and with music held services. I tried it but now they went back to a chairman again. I don't need a chairman, with music and sermon, I can do the whole thing. The other thing that I did was perhaps for the Buddhist who lost someone in the war-- soldiers--that there be a Buddhist gravemarker. I did that when I was in Hawaii.

TSUDA: And what was the symbol that you had made official?

ISHIURA: Well, actually in Hawaii, I was a sort of a circuit minister, too. I'd go around to all the islands and speak to various church groups.

TSUDA: But, you said you promoted the Buddhist wheel to become the official symbol of the grave markers of the deceased soldiers? So to this day they are still using the Wheel of Dharma.

ISHIURA: It's part of the government property now. So anyone deceased-- soldiers, veterans. The Veterans Office that handles all the funerals--its all part of the whole thing. You ask. "I'm a Buddhist"--you get that unconditionally. And also when I was with the Boy Scouts, I go to various retreats--I'll go to

the Christian Life for the Christian soldiers, for the Boy Scouts, and Catholics and the David--the Star of David--for the Jewish Boy Scouts. And now for the Buddhists. Well, how this happened was this. I went to lunch one day all by myself. And I had on my Boy Scout badge pin. And across the way there was a guy always looking at me, you know? And after I finished, he finished, too. And he came close by and we looked at each other. And he did this Scout handshake. We're both Boy Scouts. He was from Japan. And then he said he had time, "Let's talk." And we talked about the Buddhist award. In Japan we don't have an award, nor in the United States. And he said, "I'll go back to Tokyo; I'm going to work in Japan. You work here." And we both worked. At the same time, it was approved by the National Council of Boy Scouts--both sides. It was the Bukkyo Sho in Japan and the Sangha Award²⁸ here. And there's a picture in here, when it was approved.

TSUDA: Among your memorabilia. The Sangha Award.

ISHIURA: And that, you know, really, I realized that some one had to devote full attention to achieve any results.

TSUDA: And you also served on the National Board of Scouts--a Director?

ISHIURA: That was a good chance for me to work on that. Since I left, no one is serving now. In fact, they told me in Hawaii that they did not find a replacement for me.

TSUDA: You mean the Boy Scouts of America.

ISHIURA: You have to be dedicated and work in it; you know, and I did that, and now they don't have that kind of dedication among the ministers.

²⁸Sangha Award: Merit badge for Buddhist Scouts

- TSUDA: But the Sangha Award continues, because I know they have that at the Sacramento Betsuin.
- ISHIURA: I have to go down to L.A. to Higashi Hongwanji and others to tell them that this is available for all Scouts so that they can use it.
- TSUDA: Okay. So, you were in Hawaii, and you helped with making sure that the official symbol of the Buddhist Church was put on the gravemarkers of the deceased soldiers. And that was very important, I think, because many soldiers died during World War II.
- ISHIURA: I was trying to work with the monument committee of the Armed Forces. Many Buddhist soldiers said they had no religion. But now their descendants are saying he was Buddhist. And many have a cross on it. So, in Seattle, several Jewish removed the cross and they have the Star of David. So all at government expense. So, I'm working with a guy in--not Salinas--another town there--to nationalize it and I asked him, since I'm no longer active in BCA this year--a board member, I mean, to use the BCA and work with the BCA on this subject, but I don't know what happened. The BCA, too, they don't care, on the whole.
- TSUDA: Do you think they don't care, or they don't have the power that . . .
- ISHIURA: I think, basically, they have to feel it. They don't have that.
- TSUDA: Oh, I see. There are probably so many ramifications now that their energy is not focused on something like this.
- ISHIURA: I called my friend in Vancouver [Canada] with the BCC²⁹ to send any kind of message to Princess Diana's tragic demise. [The response was], "What?" --that kind of attitude.

²⁹Buddhist Churches of Canada

- TSUDA: I see. Let's not get too ahead of the story now, okay? So now, how long were you there in Hawaii?
- ISHIURA: About twelve and a half years, I think.
- TSUDA: From right after the war in 1946.
- ISHIURA: Sometime in 1947, I think, until 1958.
- TSUDA: And did you get married there in Hawaii?
- ISHIURA: I came to Berkeley to get married.
- TSUDA: But you were still in the Buddhist ministry in Hawaii. And so you married Mary?
- ISHIURA: In Berkeley. I got married when the mother-in-law was out of town.
- TSUDA: [Laughter] Why was that?
- ISHIURA: Oh, to make it less complicated.
- TSUDA: Oh, so you had a very small, private wedding.
- ISHIURA: She called all her friends by telephone.
- TSUDA: And what year was this?
- ISHIURA: And you know, the officiant was Bishop Shigefuji, and my father-to-be was Dr. Malalasekera.
- TSUDA: Who?
- ISHIURA: Dr. Malalasekera.
- TSUDA: From where?
- ISHIURA: Actually, he was the Ambassador to the United Nations from Sri Lanka. I got to know him in Hawaii.
- TSUDA: And he was your father-in-law?
- ISHIURA: No, no. Father in standing for me.
- TSUDA: Oh, oh. I see. That's what I couldn't understand because. . .

ISHIURA: The other one--Dr. Alan Watts was one of my friends in attendance too.

TSUDA: Is that right? So you had quite a distinguished wedding party there.

ISHIURA: They were all my friends.

TSUDA: Where did you go for the wedding reception?

ISHIURA: We went back to Hawaii

TSUDA: And did you go on a honeymoon?

ISHIURA: Hawaii is a honeymoon place, really.

TSUDA: Yes, really. Okay, so you went back there to live, and did you have any children?

ISHIURA: Three..

TSUDA: Three children. Now, what are their names and their ages now.

ISHIURA: Maya and Dana.

TSUDA: Maya is the oldest? Maya was born when?

ISHIURA: April 24, 1954.

TSUDA: And what is she doing now? Is she married?

ISHIURA: She's an art director in TV and movies.

TSUDA: And does she have children?

ISHIURA: She told me long ago that she would never get married to men. She was married once. A student. Both students. And so she had three or four jobs to support him through college. And one day when she was out, after marriage, he took off with everything she owned. Even the bed. And she came home from work one day, she had all the job to support his education. She had nothing now. She called us in Berkeley crying, so I called Dana and asked her to help her. So she told me, "Men, never!" But she is now married to a schoolmate, and he's teaching at NYU [New York University],

but she's in Vancouver. So, through E-mail, they talk to each other. They seem to be pretty happy now.

TSUDA: So do you have any grandchildren from that marriage?

ISHIURA: Dana has a [son by a previous marriage].

TSUDA: That's your next daughter. Where does she live and what does she do?

ISHIURA: She is living in Toronto. She was a bank teller, still is off and on. But now she's really involved in cultural things-- plays. She also goes to many community groups to read stories for those who can't read. Because her boyfriend is a movie director and tells her to do all these things, so he's supporting her. That's what she says.

TSUDA: And your third one?

ISHIURA: Is Karma. He's here. His office is Federal/State office-- child care office on Folsom [Blvd.]. They have over 50 on the staff, I think.

TSUDA: How old is he?

ISHIURA: He was born in 1956.

TSUDA: So he's about forty one then.

ISHIURA: So, he's got a pretty good position.

TSUDA: Is he married?

ISHIURA: He has two kids, married to a Caucasian girl. His boy is seven now. But when he was six this summer, he won all the swim meets and he swam against a thirteen year old group, and he won there, too.

TSUDA: My goodness. Is he going to be in the Olympics one day?

ISHIURA: He's a tiny kid but . . .

TSUDA: Does he have the ambition to be an Olympic swimmer?

ISHIURA: It's too early to speculate. Now, he is a very good swimmer.

TSUDA: Oh, very good.

ISHIURA: The next one is Ananda. He was born in 1962--November. He's now in Canada--Toronto. He's helping his sister and other friends. He has a lot of brains, you know. But hates going to organized school. He hates that. So he finished high school through correspondence. And he says, "It's paper!" But you need formal education. And he's good in math and everything! But he wants to--he says this is not earning money. He wants to do physical things. He used to work at docks and buildings and moving companies, and now because he has experience, he builds sets. And also he likes to write. He reads the *New Yorker* magazine. So I give him that. So he writes very good articles--*New Yorker*- style articles. And also while in Canada, from age four to junior high he went to Canadian Conservatory of Music.. He is very talented.

TSUDA: What does he play?

ISHIURA: The piano. One day at the Canadian Music Conservatory, he was practicing. And Glenn Gould, his name. Glenn Gould, top pianist in Canada was walking in the corridor. He said, "Who's that playing? I like his touch." So he recognized Ananda's playing, but, also, Ananda rebelled. But he teaches my grandson the piano. So I don't know what he plans to do.

TSUDA: He's married then?

ISHIURA: No, he's not married. The youngest is Asoka. She was born in 1964.

- TSUDA: So, she's about thirty three years old then? And she lives across the street from you? And she's the one that's very active in the Sacramento Taiko Dan.³⁰
- ISHIURA: She's getting sort of burned out now.
- TSUDA: Oh, she's been in there many years now.
- ISHIURA: Many years. And also with the leadership, she wasn't very happy. Her field is in child care.
- TSUDA: Child Care. She enjoys . . .
- ISHIURA: She likes that. What's that special program called--"Head Start."
- TSUDA: Oh, Head Start. Is she in that program? And she was also a teacher for the Lumbini kids at Florin Buddhist Church.
- ISHIURA: She started that about eight-nine years ago, you know? But before she left there, she made the prospectus for that group, but then something happened. In fact she made the whole list. Last year she had in mind the Tibetan movement to do something, but the minister did not agree with her perspective. So when she came home, I helped her write a letter of resignation to sever her ties with Florin.
- TSUDA: So that must have hurt you very much.
- ISHIURA: Hurt her, you know.
- TSUDA: Hurt you, too, right?
- So going back to your children, then, you gave them all Buddhist names, right?
- ISHIURA: I had a purpose in that.
- TSUDA: Yes, what was the purpose? And where did you get those names from?

³⁰Japanese drum playing group

- ISHIURA: When the time came to name them, we both sat down to discuss philosophy of selecting names.
- TSUDA: You and Mary.
- ISHIURA: And I told Mary that I do travel a lot. Usually by air traveling all over the place and on the airplane you sit with strangers. First thing that comes to you, "How are you? Your name? How are you? Family? Kids?" I had five kids, Maya, Dana, Karma, Ananda, Asoka. So if it is an hour and a half trip, I can talk about the history of Buddhism to this guy here for the first time, so it was an easy way for me to introduce a Buddhist subject.
- TSUDA: So they were always asking you how many children do you have and what are their names.
- ISHIURA: Names. Names--what does it mean? So I was given this chance to talk to people what each name meant.
- TSUDA: Very clever. So, going back to your name. How did you get the name, Newton, and what was your name before you were named Newton?
- ISHIURA: I was born--Takashi was my name until my ordination. And in the Shin-Shu tradition, when you are ordained, you receive a Dharma³¹ name, and at that time we were privileged to make our own selection. And my father thought it would be helpful, so he gave me *Shunken*. "Takashi" can be read as "Shun," and "Ken" came from my father's name, "Shunken." I didn't like it at all. But anyway, I said, "Thank you, Dad, but I have other ideas." And I went through all kinds of names.
- TSUDA: So you were able to select your ordination name?

³¹Dharma Name: Homyo

ISHIURA: I was stumped, so I wrote to my old friend in Hawaii, Rev. Shinkaku Ernest Hunt, a hakujin³² minister. And he replied. He told me you are eventually returning to the states, so it would be nice if you find a homyo³³ which can be used both ways. And he suggested "Newton." I got the letter and I sat down to find a kanji³⁴ for "Newton." I couldn't find anything good, you know. And I found this--and I put New-ton [in Japanese phonetic letters]. And I gave it to the church office.

TSUDA: Honpa Hongwanji?

ISHIURA: That's right. And when they brought it to the office, the staff member said, "This is a peculiar strange name."

TSUDA: Oh, this is Nishi Hongwanji.

ISHIURA: And the whole office began to hum about this time we have a man with a homyo, New-ton. [Laughter] And also when I was transferred to Hawaii, I legalized my name.

TSUDA: I see. You know, you talked about that you looked different from the rest of the family. And you are also much taller. How much taller-- how tall are you? And how much taller were you above your father?

ISHIURA: Did you know that by grade six, I was 6-9? I was the tallest kid in the whole school.

TSUDA: You mean 5-9.

ISHIURA: Yeah, 5'-9". In fact, in 1932, when the Japanese Olympic team went to Los Angeles, on the way they stopped over about five days in Honolulu. At that time I was with my father in Honolulu. He was at a meeting. And one

³²Hakujin: Caucasian

³³Homyo: Buddhist name

³⁴Kanji: Chinese character

day someone said, "Let's go to Punaho High School, the Japanese team is limbering up." So this guy took us in his car. We were in the grandstand watching. And one member of the team-- his name was Yoshioka, a sprinter, said, "Issho ni hashiro!" "Let's run!" It was a 100 meter dash. I lined up in the same lane and I ran against him. Up to 50 meters, I was way ahead. But at 100 meters, he overtook me. His stamina, I guess. He told me I should "continue running because you'll make a record in track history." I was a big kid--5-9.

TSUDA: Yes, 5-9. How much taller were you over and above your father?

ISHIURA: Oh, a few inches, I guess.

TSUDA: He was what--about 5-7 or so?

ISHIURA: No, he was about 5-6 or 7. My mother was about 5-4.

TSUDA: Was your height an asset for you? Or did that work kind of against you sometimes in Japan?

ISHIURA: I mean, in grade school, it was against, because when I took part in the Junior Olympics, you score everything by weight and height. And because I'm taller, I had to score much more than others. So I could out distance them, but by the score, I often lost.

TSUDA: Judging by handicap, you lost. I see

ISHIURA: So then the Japanese School had this Undo kai³⁵ once a year or twice a year. No match in that-- racing and everything--the kids were way behind-- It was kind of silly running and receiving all the prizes.

TSUDA: Then why did you not like changing in high school?

ISHIURA: I never liked in public to dress and undress.

³⁵Undokai: Field Day

TSUDA: I see. So you were shy?

ISHIURA: I guess so. I'm still--so I became a member at the Riverlake Health Center, but I came home to take a shower. And I resigned eventually.

TSUDA: Now, in your history then, we are--you're still in Hawaii. Did you have all your children in Hawaii?

ISHIURA: Maya, Dana, and Karma were born in Hawaii. All a year apart.

TSUDA: Where was your next assignment?

ISHIURA: While in Hawaii, I was first contacted by my friend Rev. [Kenryu] Tsuji of Toronto. He had a position to go to San Francisco as the Director of Buddhist Education. And he asked me to come to Toronto.

TSUDA: This is Rev. Kenryu Tsuji?

ISHIURA: This is about 1956 or so. In the beginning, in a way, I thought--I tried to. . . And then I thought I don't want to leave what I'm doing in Hawaii. I developed the chaplaincy program and armed forces involvement, and the church was really in the limelight. And, also, my life was enjoyable-- in the morning, I used to go to the hospitals--about eleven hospitals. And by one, I'm free. And I call home to ask Mary, to meet me in Waikiki for lunch. Life was sort of nice with me. But then insistently, the telephone and letters and everything, and finally Bishop Shigefuji came to Hawaii. He's my father's schoolmate. That's the point he emphasized, "I went to school with your father."

TSUDA: So Bishop Shigefuji succeeded Bishop Matsukage.

ISHIURA: After him. Yes.

TSUDA: Yes, after him. And then he knew your father real well, and he came to Hawaii to talk to you about transferring . . .

ISHIURA: He came twice, I think. On the second trip he was softening up, and so I thought that maybe. . . . And, also, Tsuji is my real close friend from Japan--schoolmate.

TSUDA: Oh, you were schoolmates at Ryukoku?

ISHIURA: Yes, we did many things together.

TSUDA: Oh, I see.

ISHIURA: I thought about his advancement, he would be head of a department, and then I said I'll go to Toronto. And at the farewell party in Honolulu, the ladies cried because they thought--they said I'd be living with the bears, in igloos, you know. And Mary didn't know where Toronto was. She thought it was near Vancouver. I knew where it was because I used to travel there. We arrived at Toronto Airport and the Immigration Officer looked at us and shook his head, "Why are you coming into Canada from balmy Hawaii?" This was the first thing they told me. It was snowing heavily. Next day, Rev. Tsuji gave me a key and car to go to the customs and post office. So I got a map and I went downtown driving along unknown snowy streets. Wow! To go to a strange city with a one-way street in snow it was tough driving but I made it. It gave me courage because you've got to be on your own to know the place.

TSUDA: How old were you then?

ISHIURA: Let me see now--1958 and 18, so what--in my 30s. No, 40.

TSUDA: 1958 and 18--yes, 40. So you were still a very young minister with a big assignment, because at that time were the . . .

ISHIURA: To fill his shoes, it was.

TSUDA: Did he have a big congregation?

ISHIURA: About 400. Now, they have a thousand. When I left, there were about 800 something because I doubled it.

TSUDA: So, what was the first thing that you wanted to do as a minister there in Canada?

ISHIURA: Well, I first wanted to get what Rev. Tsuji had in mind--intention to serve as his so-called perspective for my church in Canada. That was my first. The second was to get to know the members first, and then I wanted the church to be involved in the community. Not just church but other things. Maybe I went overboard in that endeavor.

TSUDA: Did you have a nice parsonage to live in?

ISHIURA: First, I lived with him. Then the member's apartment for a while. And they built a home. I went by and I couldn't even find it. It was a tiny lot. They built a two-story building and I lived there for a while. The kids played with the closet doors--made-believe they were apartments with elevator doors. [Laughter] They made the signs and all. And when bachan³⁶ came to live with us for a while, one kid had to sleep in the closet--tiny house.

TSUDA: So, when you say "bachan," is that Mary's mother?

ISHIURA: Yes, Mary's mother. She came many, many times

TSUDA: So, did your parents ever come to visit you from Japan?

ISHIURA: Well, my father died in '45.

TSUDA: Oh, before the war ended.

ISHIURA: My mother died in 1961. So my mom didn't know I got married. I know she sent a girl from Japan to see me.

³⁶ Bachan: Grandmother

TSUDA: Oh, I see.

ISHIURA: But I didn't know that was her intention.

TSUDA: So, was your marriage going very well at this point?

ISHIURA: Yes, pretty good.

TSUDA: And you had more children?

ISHIURA: [Inaudible] She was very supportive in my ministry. In fact, she had a music background. So I had several services with music as the nucleus. Once I had a service with teenagers taking part with the folk music. We were able to do it because Mary was a musician.

TSUDA: So you were a very contemporary minister wherever you went then.

ISHIURA: True.

TSUDA: You kept up with the times and . . .

ISHIURA: In fact, I went to Folsom. This was July--in July this one new church was coming up and I went to the service . . .

TSUDA: This year, OK. 1997.

ISHIURA: When I walked in, it was a school choir put together into a church. In fact, it was a TV studio.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

ISHIURA: The hymns were written for all occasions—more of popular songs, and the preacher has no clergy outfit --he's just dressed like this --T-shirt like this. And he talks informally. I had a similar service in Toronto many, many times, about 30, 40 years ago.

TSUDA: But this one is . . .

ISHIURA: But the older ones didn't like it.

TSUDA: But this one in Folsom wasn't a Buddhist church, was it?

ISHIURA: No, Christian.

[End of Session 1]

[SESSION 2, September 18, 1997]

TSUDA: Today is Thursday, September 18, 1997. It is the second day of Rev. Ishiura's oral history session. As I reviewed the first day's interview, I noticed there were areas which beg to be expanded. Therefore, before we proceed, I will go back to questions related to Tape 1. And this is at Rev. Ishiura's home.

Sensei³⁷, as an American citizen, what were your feelings when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066? Did you feel compliance or did you feel objection?

ISHIURA: Well, my initial thought was compliance and also obligation. I was ordered to go to the Los Angeles Buddhist Church to take over the duties because all the ministers were being incarcerated. And I was in complete command of all the ministers' families who came to the church to live with us. And my duty was to look after them and to see them safely at the Santa Anita Assembly Center. Then I began to think about the order and what I should be doing, and I thought to myself that I am an American and I should act in accordance with my feelings. And so my Sunday service was basically that I am American, we're all Americans, and we have a duty as Americans, and that was my whole feeling. Of course, my thoughts were not really welcomed by many Kibei members of the congregation. They felt otherwise.

³⁷Sensei: "Teacher," respectful title for a Buddhist minister.

TSUDA: Were you ever asked to join the armed services?

ISHIURA: At one time the military--so-called military asked me they were going to start a new school of--similar to the language school which we began in Monterey and Camp Savage in Fort Snelling as instructor. By that time I didn't feel that military was my base--that I should pursue my spiritual quest.

TSUDA: While you were teaching at Yale University--Army Specialized Training Program [ASTP], were you actively practicing the Buddhist ministry anywhere?

ISHIURA: At that time when I went to New Haven in the fall of 1943, I did not really know of any Buddhist activities. But one day on the campus I met an Asian and I approached him. While talking with him he told me he is Mr. Stanley Okada from New York City. And when he knew that I am Buddhist minister, he asked me to come and help him because the church had a minister by the name of Rev. Hozen Seki who was then in Montana, I believe, or North Dakota, in one of those enemy alien camps. And so from then on, every weekend, I went to New York after my class was over, and I did my duties as the minister --did the memorial services, the Sunday services, and so forth. And that was my beginning of getting involved in the Eastern United States Buddhist movements. Eventually, there were churches in the Midwest, Cleveland, Seabrook, and Boston, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis areas, and so I volunteered to be the circuit minister during my days off or weekends. I used to travel to these places, and we formed a YBA [Young Buddhist Association] and we formed the Eastern

Young Buddhist League which was the nucleus to pursuing Buddhist activities from the Dharma school up to the adult services.

TSUDA: I noticed some of your You mentioned that as a youngster practicing kendo you transferred your hate for kendo to your father. However, you have mentioned in a sermon you gave that knowing kendo actually prevented you from a possible tragic accident. You spontaneously expressed your gratitude to your father, though belatedly. Could you please recount this story?

ISHIURA: Well, after many years, I was trying to say, "Thank you, Dad." I never did because this goes way back to my grade school days when I was forced to practice kendo almost everyday. And my mother often told me, "You can still say 'Thank You'" but I never did. And the last opportune time was in a 1941 when I boarded the *Tatsuta Maru* from Kobe, my father came to see me off, I was just about to say "Thank You," but I guess my ego took hold of me. And it was 1958, I think it was, when I was transferred from Hawaii to Canada. And I'm one of those workaholics. I spent long hours working with the young people. I guess they felt sorry for me, and so one day they took me out to play golf. That was the first time in my life. They taught me how to hold a club and so forth, and I was about to tee off and I used this, you know, these--what do you call this--a club; I teed off, and when I did, the ball hit a stump and it came right back, and instantaneously, I had my club in my left hand and it shielded my left eye. And when I did that--when the moment occurred, I just said, "Tochan,"³⁸ Thank you!" and those around me were sort of puzzled. What am I saying? And I explained to

³⁸Tochan: Father

them that long ago I started to take kendo. It was a fascination in the beginning. Later on I began to hate kendo and then I transferred my hate to my father. And for all those years until 1958 I did not say "Thank You." And when the ball came right back at me, I just held my club up instantaneously, I think, doing kendo, and that so-called reflex was something I learned through my long years of kendo practice with my father. And I felt very good that the feeling I had within me came right out to say, "Tochan, thank you!"

TSUDA: So that was a very spontaneous heartfelt thank you.

ISHIURA: Yes, I think so, yes.

TSUDA: And it put a closure to your need to say thank you.

ISHIURA: Of course, my Dad never heard me saying this, but I'm sure he knew I was thankful.

TSUDA: Spiritually, I'm sure, he knows. That's a beautiful story.

OK, now, being the oldest son, did you not feel the need to take over the family temple. Why did you not want to take over the family temple?

ISHIURA: Well, in Japan. . . . I went to Japan in 1935. Eventually, I heard my friends and colleagues say that they are going to take over the temple because in Jodo Shin-Shu they called it sesshu-seido³⁹-- they would take over from the father. Well, at that time it didn't dawn on me as being serious. But while I was studying at Kyoto, I began to feel that I don't feel like a Japanese. I don't feel the kind of feeling that Japanese people feel everyday, and also the Country of Japan was becoming very militaristic. Individual freedom was lost, so I felt that my place is not to take over my

³⁹Sesshu-seido: A system of taking over.

father's place but to go back to Hawaii eventually. I was not loyal to Japan, nor feel the same kind of feeling. I was anti-militaristic. I talked about my friends in theaters, about building peace, and all those things were, I guess, predominant in my mind, so I did not accept the responsibility to take over the temple in Japan.

TSUDA: So, in the words of those days, I guess, you would be described as a "peacenik."

ISHIURA: Plus anti-Japanese, they called it. They called it hannichi⁴⁰. And, I guess, I was that. In the eyes of the Japanese thought police who hounded me for all my years in Japan.

TSUDA: So you are very pro-American and . . .

ISHIURA: In that aspect, yes.

TSUDA: OK. Now, we are going to continue with your life history in Canada. In the first case you got off the plane at Toronto. And you were asked why would you want to leave Hawaii to come to Canada. But now you are settling down in Canada with your goals, and one of them was to be community minded and another was to continue Rev. Tsuji's tradition of spreading spiritualism of Buddhism.

ISHIURA: His shoes were too big to fill. Rev. Tsuji and I were schoolmates in Japan, and we talked and we dreamt about what we would do when we go back to where we came from. And wherever I went--well, my ministry actually blossomed in Hawaii. I got involved in the community in Hawaii. I was in close contact with the military. That is, to help them with their counseling, to assist and lead in various community ceremonies. In the

⁴⁰Hannichi: Half-Japanese

legislature I was the first Buddhist Chaplain to serve in any of the United States Legislatures. So in Canada I pursued in a similar way. I got to know the mayor well and eventually during the Canadian Centennial observance, the Prime Minister who was Lester Pearson appointed me to a six men committee to assist him in committee--to help with the Centennial celebration. And through these efforts, I was selected to serve on the All Canada Interfaith Committee. I was one of the six involved. We had a magazine; I was on the editorial board. So in many ways, I was part of the community. And I brought--when I was elected Bishop, brought the headquarters to Toronto to be close to Ottawa to pursue that Buddhism is not one segment of oriental religion but it is part of the Canadian religion. The Canadian concept is not a melting pot but the mosaic pot. Each will exist and we try to offer its beauty--good points of the religion to the mosaic of Canadian culture.

TSUDA: I see. And during this interfaith--One Hundredth Centennial . . .

ISHIURA: Centennial, yes.

TSUDA: . . . that you were asked to go to Westminster Abby to meet with some-- the Queen and maybe . . .

ISHIURA: That's true. In England--that's still, I guess, the mother country. They were going to celebrate Canadian Centennial. So, from the Queen's office the Prime Minister of Canada received communication saying that to send your religious leaders to Westminster Abby, so he appointed a Catholic, a Jewish, a Protestant, and he called me--that you are--you are a Buddhist representative. So I was one of the four appointed to go to the Westminster Abby. But then two days before I was supposed to depart from Montreal,

the Queen's consul and the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote or called to the Prime Minister saying they are not ready to receive a Buddhist leader at this service. So when the funeral service [1997] of the Princess Diana was held at the Abby, I was very keen to observe [on television] the Abby, because I was supposed to be there about 30 years ago as one of the Canadian delegates at the Centennial service.

TSUDA: But then you had a chance to meet Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip when they came to Canada for the Centennial, did you not?

ISHIURA: Oh, the Prime Minister felt very bad that I was rejected, but he told me that when the Queen comes to Canada he would try everything possible to satisfy me and also that I would get to meet the Queen and the Prince and I did. I was--I even went to many official functions in Ottawa. I went to the banquet, I was part of the service, and I had a bull session with the Prince, and the Prince said, "You've got to meet my wife--I mean the Queen," so I was taken nearby. I curtsied. Of course, guests can't go to the Queen and say, "Hi!" But then at one of the services, we sat close by, and she spoke to me.

TSUDA: Well, that was quite an honor for you.

ISHIURA: Oh, yes.

TSUDA: Now, you also were involved politically in some Indian affairs, were you not?

ISHIURA: Yes, through the interfaith committee, the Canadian Interfaith Committee, we got involved in many of the discriminatory issues of Canada. For instance, the Indians were living in the reservations and they lived off the fish in the lakes--the rivers-- which are polluted by mercury, so we got

involved in that. We also were involved in the Inuit⁴¹ problems, so the Interfaith Council would branch out into the human rights area, and being on the committee, I went to all these meetings and took part in it.

TSUDA: Your wife, Mary, received her bachelor's degree in social work at Berkeley?

ISHIURA: No, she went to Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois.

TSUDA: Oh, I see.

ISHIURA: Her major was sociology.

TSUDA: Sociology. So, how did she help you in your ministry and how did she help the congregation while you were in Canada?

ISHIURA: Well, to me, when you go to Toronto, Canada, today, there are many memorials concerning Mary. And she was in many ways so helpful for me in my ministry. Being a social worker, she cared for the kids, and when they had this new math movement in Canada we discussed it. We have to know more about it, so she went back to school. She was just about to finish from education to get her degree in teaching but she became very ill. To that extent her mind was--a minister's wife, yes. But more than that, to fulfill it in the church, so she. . . . Her energy was focused on the children; she formed a choir; she formed a symphony orchestra; and she felt that there were many ladies in the age--30-40--bracket who need to go into other areas, so she formed a new women's group at the church, and they did many social work in the community. In fact, we adopted a Tibetan orphans. We used to aid the Tibetan nursery in Dharamsala, so she was involved in all these activities in the church which helped me a lot. It

⁴¹Inuit: Eskimo

helped the church a lot, and today when you go to the new music hall, there is a chair called the "Mary Ishiura Chair."

TSUDA: Which music hall?

ISHIURA: And they also have an organ fund under her name. All these were . . .

TSUDA: Was this through the Toronto Buddhist Church?

ISHIURA: Yes.

TSUDA: I see. You mentioned about her illness. Could you expand on that, please.

ISHIURA: While we were in Canada, that is, when she was still attending school, she got ulcers and she had two operations, and the last one was quite critical. I was called about midnight from the hospital saying that your wife might not last tonight. And so it was that critical. And so I think that her-- eventually when she had cancer in Berkeley, I think it was developing from the time she was in Canada. And I felt that her mother was in Berkeley and all the sisters, so I thought that my duty is best to resign from my ministry in Canada and find a post in California. And so my friend was a Bishop in the United States--Tsuji--and he made all accommodations so I can return to Berkeley.

TSUDA: I see. Also, when you went to Toronto to take over what Rev. Tsuji was doing, was your position called Bishop at that time?

ISHIURA: There was no Bishop. Canada was under the United States, so the Bishops Hanayama and Shigefuji were the [de facto] Canadian Bishops until 1967.

TSUDA: Did you establish that post then?

ISHIURA: At that time the Canadians [Buddhists] felt that they should go their own way and they became independent.

TSUDA: And you were their first Bishop?

ISHIURA: I was their first Bishop. By coincidence, Tsuji and I were about--elected at the same time--by coincidence.

TSUDA: You were elected twice.

ISHIURA: Yes, that's right.

TSUDA: And then what year--well, what year, then, did you resign from that position?

ISHIURA: In 1976. The only way for me to get my transfer was to resign my position there, and so I did in '76.

TSUDA: OK. And where did you go?

ISHIURA: In July of 1977 I came to Berkeley.

TSUDA: OK. Before we get into that. Before we leave the Canadian history, I'd like to ask you-- the Canadian Japanese suffered the same discrimination by their government as the American Japanese. What government edict was it that allowed this to happen?

ISHIURA: As soon as the war [World War II] started, I think the Canadians followed the allies' position that the Japanese should be cautioned, and also that they should be removed from the West Coast. I learned in talking to many, many members--in the beginning they separated the men from the women, and the women went to certain camps, men to work camps, and also their own government promised that they will be custodians of their property on the West Coast. But eventually news came that the government just sold off all their property. Many Japanese Canadians eventually relocated east of the Rockies, and many went into Ontario and Quebec. And that is how,

I believe, churches in Eastern Canada really flourished because the leaders came out from the West Coast into those areas.

TSUDA: Wasn't there some kind of law that during war time that they could do something like this--that Canadians would lose their civil rights?

ISHIURA: Yes, there was this law--I would say, early 1970 or something because the War Measures Act⁴² which means that when they enact this act, all Canadians would lose their civil rights, and this happened. The last time this happened was in Quebec when the Independent Movement Group, with the aid of French Movement Group, kidnapped some Canadian officials and they enacted this War Measures Act for about ten days. And when this happened, I was very involved with the Interfaith Group, and we thought that we should do something about it. So we were contrary, so spoke about it, we held meetings, and we collected signatures. Eventually, these signatures were taken to Ottawa, and we think [in] seven days or ten days the law was struck out of the Canadian law books. So there is no War Measures Act. And I'm very proud that I was one of those who was involved in ridding of this law.

TSUDA: But was this not the War Measures Act that actually put the Canadian Japanese in internment camp?

ISHIURA: Same act.

TSUDA: It was. So it was enacted even before World War II.

ISHIURA: Yes, that's true, yes.

⁴²War Measures Act: Canadian law enacted in 1914 which was used to force all Canadian Japanese on the West Coast to relocate for "national security."

TSUDA: Now, but the Canadian government was the first to give redress and reparations to the Japanese Canadians. Now, in America, did you receive your share of redress and reparations from the U. S. Government?

ISHIURA: I did, yes, I did. But, you know, the man who was involved in that Canadian reparations is coming here to Sacramento--the last Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. In Canada, there was this campaign pledge--the election. He said when elected as Prime Minister he will issue the statement to give redress to all Canadians, so when he was elected, next day they began to receive their checks.

TSUDA: Is that right!

ISHIURA: There was no introduction to the Parliament or any discussion. Unlike ours--it [U.S.] took years and years.

TSUDA: So their democracy or their government works in a different way then.

ISHIURA: Very much so, yes.

TSUDA: Have you talked to your children and grandchildren about your camp experience?

ISHIURA: My oldest daughter who is in Canada often questions me about what happened in Canada. But then I told her that I was not in Canada then. I was in the United States and I used to talk to her about what happened to me. And my second daughter was also interested. The others--when time occurred, by bits, I talked to them about it. But my experience was not bitter. Through this, I learned a great deal, and by learning it, I became wiser, and I used my camp experience, not through bitterness but by trying to aid people to understand our situation, and then by our own efforts, we can do better in the future.

TSUDA: Did you find any significant differences in the attitudes and endurance of the Canadian Japanese vs. American Japanese in regards to forced incarceration during World War II?

ISHIURA: When I went to Canada I knew they were incarcerated, but I didn't find that deep of resentment. They were able to adjust to any situation, and I think the reason why the churches in Canada, especially in Eastern Canada, flourished because they were able to adjust to the situation and used it to their advantage. I understand that many of the Canadians were employed by Jewish firms. And the Jewish were those who were discriminated, and they hired many Japanese Canadians because they were, I guess, trustworthy, they worked hard. And so I think the Canadians showed a different attitude of their experience.

TSUDA: Were you active in the Boy Scouts while you were in Canada?

ISHIURA: In Canada--the only thing I did was--I was approached by the Council so I realigned their Boy Scout Award program. And also I communicated to all the churches the existence of the Boy Scout Award, but to the extent I helped about two or three Eagle Scouts to get their scout awards

TSUDA: Sangha awards?

ISHIURA: Yes.

TSUDA: Did your children enjoy the Canadian life style?

ISHIURA: Well, I still have three [children] in Canada, and they prefer Canada. Of course, they were raised there from grade school, all their friends are there, and I often talk about all the kids to come back here. But, they say this is-- Canada is their life and their friends are there, and their contacts are there, and they feel very comfortable living in Canada.

TSUDA: So are they Americans or are they Canadians?

ISHIURA: My eldest daughter, Maya, and the next one, Dana, are Americans. And the youngest--Ananda is still dual, I think.

TSUDA: I see. So you had children who were born there?

ISHIURA: Ananda and the . . .

TSUDA: Asoka?

ISHIURA: . . . youngest daughter, Asoka, was born there, yes.

TSUDA: I see. Well, was the educational system in Canada comparable to the U. S. education?

ISHIURA: The education in Canada is different by province and has gone through so many changes. When you go to Quebec and parts of Ontario, French is required. They have to be bilingual. But as far as the standardization, I don't think it. . . . It is very comparable, I think.

TSUDA: Are their state universities cheaper than private universities?

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

ISHIURA: Tuition-wise, I think the community colleges are very reasonable. The main universities, as far as the academic standards are concerned, I think, is comparable to all the Ivy League schools, but not as expensive, though.

TSUDA: So, you packed up and you left with Mary back to Berkeley. Now, what was your new assignment?

ISHIURA: Well, before we even thought of coming back to Canada, we were assigned to Berkeley, and my wife thought that it's too close to home. And so I wrote back explaining our feelings. So I just complied with the wishes of Bishop Tsuji, and we came back to Berkeley.

TSUDA: And how long were you at the Berkeley Buddhist Church?

ISHIURA: I took office July of 1977 and on September 1, 1981, I was assigned to a place called Florin Buddhist Church. My assignment in Berkeley--I was very active in the interfaith committee. I served as Chairman. We hosted interfaith [Inaudible] service at church, and so many got to know about our church. I had access to new enrollment to get in touch with new students, so we started a University of California YBA [Young Buddhist Association], and we had many kids coming to our church.

TSUDA: So, coming to Florin Buddhist Church, which is more in the country, what were your feelings?

ISHIURA: I had dreams what I'd like to do, because it's the capital city, but after I came to Florin and talking to many people, I felt that all my past activities which I did, I should try to be conservative, and pursue a day-to-day activity without much involvement. I tried to, but I felt that it was not a place for me.

TSUDA: Florin is a very self-contained community. Do you not think that?

ISHIURA: It is. It is. In fact, I once told the members truthfully that we should close this church and join with Sacramento, but, oh, did I get a cold stare.
[Laughter]

TSUDA: So, how long were you there?

ISHIURA: About 13 years, I think.

TSUDA: Did Mary come with you?

ISHIURA: No, Mary died in September 1979. It's 18 years since she passed away.

TSUDA: Was that shortly after she moved to Berkeley?

ISHIURA: Yes, we moved there in 1977, July, and next year she went to Kaiser Hospital with her older sister for spec test. She had colon cancer at the beginning of her sickness.

TSUDA: How long was she ill before she died?

ISHIURA: I would say about spring of 1978 and by '79 she passed away--about a year.

TSUDA: So how old was she?

ISHIURA: She died when she was 57.

TSUDA: She was very young then.

ISHIURA: In fact, my mom died at the same age, 57.

TSUDA: But that wasn't on the tenth of the month?

ISHIURA: Not Mary, but my mother was on the tenth.

TSUDA: What happened after that? Did you remarry?

ISHIURA: I met someone and married her. In couple of months--you see, I had two kids with me, and many household chores, and I guess she felt that she doesn't belong. Our marriage was annulled. And I married a second time again. This was a girl from Japan and she had other ideas --before long, again--dissolved the marriage.

TSUDA: That was annulled also?

ISHIURA: Yes.

TSUDA: OK. So you've been living a bachelor's life then, here in Florin.

ISHIURA: Yes.

TSUDA: How many years did you serve at the Florin Buddhist Church?

ISHIURA: Thirteen years.

TSUDA: Thirteen years. And then did you retire from Florin?

ISHIURA: I was not going to retire, but certain things happened in the ministry, and I felt that the long years--thirteen years or so, it's about time that I retire from there and find some other pursuits. So in December of 1994 I officially retired from active ministry.

TSUDA: I see. So you are still with the Buddhist Churches of America?

ISHIURA: I am. And since my retirement, before it became official I received word from Canada that they wanted me to return to Canada and to administer all churches east of the Alberta--Eastern Canada. But I thought I should enjoy my retirement.

TSUDA: Good. You certainly earned it. So you are enjoying your home here now on Flintwood Way in Sacramento.

ISHIURA: Well, it's a home base from where I used to write to the *Nichi Bei Times*⁴³ and *Hokubei Mai Nichi*⁴⁴ and eventually the *Nichi Bei Times* was so kind to accept all my articles, so I wrote good three dozen articles for them on all subjects.

TSUDA: What were the most important events that have happened to you in recent years?

ISHIURA: In recent years? Ever since retirement?

TSUDA: Yes, you know, close to retirement.

ISHIURA: Well, I guess what is important to me, I think, is that people seem to rely on me in many ways. In the beginning I was receiving many telephone calls from minister friends. As an example, a minister was scheduled to go to a Boy Scout meeting and would like me to write an aspiration for them -- something for them to read, so I used to write for them and mail it to them.

⁴³Japanese/English Newspaper - San Francisco

⁴⁴Japanese/English Newspaper - San Francisco

And also there was a minister who was working on a Master's degree from Canada but he--because at times he had to return to his post, but then he didn't have time to work his true credits on the bibliography, and so he asked me if I could help him. So luckily I kept all my books in my apartment. I read over my books and I finished it for him, and he got this Master's degree because of what I did for him. In joking, I wrote to him that to be sure when you write your thesis to include my name, but he never did. [Laughter]

TSUDA: Looking back on your life, what made you the happiest, and also what made you the saddest?

ISHIURA: Well, the happiest, I guess, was when Mary and I were in the ministry and trying to complement each other. And more so on her part, she was able to gather many materials for me, give me the information. She was also very critical of my sermons and what I did--and all those things were a plus for me. And that was really to me a very happy part of my life, and, I guess, her passing was the saddest moment of my life. So I think since she passed away, I guess I've been on a downhill.

TSUDA: If you could redo any one part of your life again, which part would it be?

ISHIURA: I think the total part of my life I would pursue with no changes.

TSUDA: If you were giving advice to young people today, what would you say?

ISHIURA: I'd like--well, my father told me that his most respected minister was the late Bishop Kanmo Imamura. This man always had time to answer letters. This was one thing I learned from my father. So I tried to answer all my correspondence. The second part--I used to see my father clean the temple all the time--really spic and span--and that, I guess, I inherited his routine.

I did the same thing when I had my own church. To see that the altar is clean. He told me this is your job--your responsibility. Those two I still pursue.

TSUDA: We are nearing the end of this interview. Is there anything that you wish to add?

ISHIURA: Anything? Well, I don't know whether I recall everything or not but as I look back in my ministry, I guess my real beginning was in Hawaii when I went there in 1946. Gradually, I felt that the ministry is not doing enough in the community--to reaching out in the community. And so in Hawaii I visited the university, the armed services, the hospitals, the Chaplains, also the media, so I made friends in the media. There was a photographer with the *Honolulu Advertiser*. He came from a very strong Christian family. But I became a close friend of this man, Shimogaki, and when he was in the hospital, I used to go to see him almost every day, and when he died, he made a will that "When I die be sure that Rev. Ishiura be the officiant." So when I went to the home, I introduced myself, they were appalled. They didn't know what to make of me. And there is another one--I read in the paper--in *Honolulu Advertiser*, Bob Krause column. There was a case in Hawaii. A young girl had heart problem, and she was about to go to Philadelphia for an operation. I read about it and learned of her departure date. So I thought to myself, I would like to go and see her and I told my wife, but she thought, "Oh, no, we have other things to do." But, anyway, I went to the airport, and there was a mob there, and I knew she was in that mob. And I ran and I saw the little girl and I saw the mother there. I approached the mother saying that I'm so-and-so, I read

about you, and I'm concerned about the whole thing. And I told her, "I know you are a Christian, but do you think your little girl would like to have this ojuzu⁴⁵?" She said, "What's ojuzu?" "I have a small red one to give you. Do you think she would she like to have it?" And she spoke to her and she said she would like to have it. [Inaudible] So everyday I wrote to her, and my letter was like a sermon. And after she returned to Hawaii, she told me that the morning she was taken to the operating room, all along the way she had the ojuzu in her left hand and she was repeating, "Namu Amida Butsu"⁴⁶ And all through that she didn't even cry, she didn't even whimper, and the doctors and nurses were really surprised. They had never seen such a brave girl in all their lives. Of course, she was [Inaudible] when she came back, and I got a call from her family saying that [they wanted] me to be the officiant. I responded by saying, "She should check with her church, the Methodist Church [Inaudible], but she said I meant so much to them so I had this service for them.

TSUDA: That's a beautiful story. Do you have any questions or comments for me?

ISHIURA: Well, I think it was a very good interview--very thorough.

TSUDA: You feel drained? [Laughter]

ISHIURA: No. I know there are many others but it's [Inaudible] magazine too. In Canada this is called *Ferment* magazine. After I left, everything collapsed. I was really a minority in the Christian dominated group. In 1967, I think, when the Canadian Interfaith Council was formed, they thought it should be a magazine defining a mosaic culture. United Church of Canada financed the magazine, and I sat on the editorial board. I think it

⁴⁵Buddhist rosary beads

⁴⁶Namu Amida Butsu: Jodo Shin Shu mantra

was a quarterly. And also the articles dealt with our interfaith activities, with the Indians and the Eskimo problems. That was, to me, a great contribution. And also, I think, I may have mentioned that in Hawaii after World War II many remains of unknown soldiers were returned to Hawaii for forensics study and burial. And they were buried at Punchbowl, and I was called in as one of the four chaplains.

TSUDA: This is Tape 2, Side B, of Rev. Newton Ishiura's oral history. You were saying about Rev. Haneda.

[This is Tape 3, continuing on Side A]

ISHIURA: Yes, well, I approached many ministers about my library and very few showed interest, and one day I thought to myself--I read where this Dr. Nobu Haneda resigned from the Numata Translation Center. A patron in Japan, a wealthy man, bought for him a building in Berkeley.

TSUDA: No, the patron bought the building for . . .

ISHIURA: Oh, yes, the patron in Japan bought the building for him in Berkeley, and I heard that he's going to start a library. So one day I called him that I had so much books and he --I guess, in a way, he knows what I have, and he just welcomed my offer. So one day I'll take my major library to his place.

TSUDA: Do you think any of your children will be interested in the ministry?

ISHIURA: I don't think they are. But they have a foot in the church in some way. My second daughter in Toronto does many projects with the church. Asoko was very involved in the church for a while. And my son was too for a while, but something happened, and I guess they have exited.

TSUDA: Then you were active with the interfaith here, weren't you in some way?

ISHIURA: Here, no.

TSUDA: In Sacramento? No?

ISHIURA: No.

TSUDA: I saw you attending a lot of the . . .

ISHIURA: Those were through my peace movement, I think.

TSUDA: What peace movement?

ISHIURA: There were--I can't recall now-- some peace action movement involving the interfaith gathering. And I was asked to participate. That was about the extent of it.

TSUDA: OK, and right now you are going to start being active in interpreting-- translating for Georgiana White at CSUS?

ISHIURA: Yes, I read the JACL bulletin, and so I went one day, and I was there Monday, and I did a little work for them. My name is on the list, so whenever they need me, they'll call me.

TSUDA: I'm sure that they are delighted to have you because they are really looking for a bilingual translator. You know, it's almost sad to say that this interview is at its end, but I do wish to thank you for allowing this interview to take place. Thank you for sharing your very adventurous and altruistic spiritual life with us. Namu Amida Butsu.

ISHIURA: Thank you.

TSUDA: In 1998, in April the Nishi Hongwanji Temple will be celebrating the 500th Memorial Year of its Eighth Abbot, Rennyo Shonin. Fifty years ago, the Nishi Hongwanji celebrated the 450th Anniversary of Rennyo Shonin. What part did you play in that celebration since [Inaudible]

ISHIURA: I was a student at the Ryukoku University and also a member of the University Man's Choir. A program was set in motion that they would like

this particular memorial to have a musical emphasis, and so it evolved in that they formed a 500-voice choir from all around Kyoto, including the women's college and our male choir, and the Tokyo Philharmonic Symphony with Kosaku Yamada conducting--participated. I went to a rehearsal at the women's college. It was held at a big theater--the Takarazuka Theater in Kyoto, and as I looked up from the stage I could see them-- monshu--church and civic dignitaries. I also saw Prince and Princesses in a special box. We sang *Bon On, Koru*. We sang, I think, beautifully because [we had] many curtain calls and that was, to me, the highlight of that 450-year memorial for Rennyo Shonin.

TSUDA: That was a very wonderful experience for you, then. Well, thank you very much and if you wish to add anything later, we can always add it. Thank you.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

NAMES LIST
North Central Valley JACL/CSUS
Oral History Project

Interviewee: Reverend Newton Ishiura

Interviewer: Hiroko Tsuda

Cooperative Institution: Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University
Sacramento,, California

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ADDENDUM

REVEREND NEWTON ISHIURA'S ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

PLACE: Tsuda Residence

DATE: May 12, 1998

TSUDA: This is an addendum to the oral history started on Reverend Newton Ishiura on September 9 and 18, 1997. The reason for this addendum is that I had attended recently on April 9, 1998 in Kyoto, Japan, the 500th Anniversary Memorial Service for our Eighth Abbot of Nishi Hongwanji, Rennyō Shonin. At the memorial service it was announced that there were Jodo-Shinshu Buddhists in attendance from North America, which means usually the United States and Canada, and South America, especially Brazilian candidates. And they made a special point to announce that there were Kenya members and there were two of them. And I believe this is the beginning of the Nishi Hongwanji's effort to propagate Jodo Shinshu Buddhism worldwide. And, interestingly, Reverend Ishiura said that he has been corresponding with these two Kenya members for fifteen years. So now he will tell us how this all got started.

ISHIURA: One day I read an account written by these two couple that they asked the BCA, the Buddhist Churches of America, to assist them in their search for materials and to help with their work there, but I understand from the article that they did not receive any favorable reply from the Buddhist Churches of

America. When I read this article in one of the publications from Japan, I immediately wrote to this International Jodo Shinshu Society or Association asking for more details about what they are doing in Kenya. So they gave me the couple's name, who they were, what they are doing, and the address. So I wrote to this couple in Kenya. It's about two and a half hours' ride south of Nairobi, in a desert. But, anyway, they were very kind enough to respond to my letter and since that time I thought it's a good project for us to take, so I spoke to the Fujinkai members in Florin and they said, "Well,"-- they weren't quite committed yet. But I suggested we should get the Northern California Buddhist Women interested. Somehow. I got nowhere. So I wrote to the couple, and I've been sending them money and books, and during Christmas, all my cards, which were non-denominational kinds. I've been sending to them so they can use it for the children. So for all those years I have been writing to them. This couple was pretty interesting; they are Mr. and Mrs. Osaka. She was a nurse, going to nursing school, and he was a theological student. His objective was to become a Christian minister. But in the seminary, I understand, according to his letter, that the professor did not have good views about Buddhism, and so he thought there must be something good about it. So he gathered materials which were not available, but, anyway, one day--I don't know how it happened--he happened to find a leaflet about Jodo Shinshu and this was based on some Tannisho text. And this, I understand, grabbed hold of his interest a lot, and

so he wrote to the group, which published this particular leaflet. And since then the Nishi Hongwanji and the Shinshu Society had been corresponding with this Mr. Osaka. Also, the International Jodo Shinshu Society, whenever they have the members tour Europe, they always stop by at a place called Kisi Province in East Africa to see the Osakas. And also the Hongwanji, through his members and through his corporation, have been sending a lot of money for them to buy more property. They also built a chapel for service; they also built a building so that Osakas can medically help those in the desert. And my interest has been all these years trying to help them and one day I got a letter. They asked me if I had a chance to come to Kenya and if you retire they would like to have me to become the minister. So I called the [Sacramento] City College if they have a class in Swahili language. The answer was they did have it before but due to lack of students they don't have the course anymore. But, in the meantime, I found a brochure which publicized they have a tape--learn by yourself at home. So I bought this Swahili language tape and I was trying to learn it by myself. In the meantime, I retired from the church in Florin, thinking that I might one day go there, but I got sick and I temporarily abandoned my plans to go to Kenya. But I have been in contact with the Osakas, and when I heard that they were in Kyoto, I regretted very much that I didn't go there because I would have had a chance to see them face-to-face.

TSUDA: Thank you. That was an interesting story. I can't say directly that they were—the Osakas were the two couples--I mean the couple that was there. But they did say there were two members from Kenya. They had their own banner.

ISHIURA: I read the name in that publication. They were there.

TSUDA: Oh, they were there? They were the ones that were there.

ISHIURA: And that's when I called a member in Hawaii and her name is Fusaye Kiyokawa. I understand Midori Kondo, widow of the Reverend Kondo from Hawaii, who is now studying for ministry in Kyoto, brought them to her room in the hotel in Kyoto, so I got to talk to them.

TSUDA: Very interesting, yes. I am sorry, too, that you were not there. Perhaps they will come to the United States.

ISHIURA: Well, their daughter wanted to come to study here, but eventually she went to France to study under the French Jodo Shinshu scholar and she was at the--last year, at the European Jodo Shinshu seminar, which one day I'd like to go if I can; Zen monshu¹ always goes there. Last year, the Numata Center, where Rev. Yamashita was planning to take a group, but the Numata Company is having a hard time. So they are not able to finance fully. There is the Buddhist Center in Dusseldorf. Its building is completed but they have many more things to do. But because the company's financial subsidy is not ample enough, so they haven't had this grand opening yet. But it's

functioning. Kathy Iseri last year went to Germany and I gave her the address, but when she went there she said it was closed. So I wrote to Numata that a member here from Sacramento went, but the place was closed. They shook their heads--it shouldn't be closed. She was unable to see it. I heard it is a beautiful building and they have a Japanese language school, Japanese cultural classes at the temple. The man who is in charge, Mr. Oden, has a German wife.

TSUDA: You certainly have led an interesting life and a very fruitful one.

ISHIURA: If I had a lot of finance, I'd like to go there.

TSUDA: Yes.

ISHIURA: In fact, Asoka's friend's father is the General Manager at [INAUDIBLE]
One day I told him that one day I would like to go to Dusseldorf. Well, he said, "Stay." He has a villa on the border of France and Germany and he said it's not too far from his home. So he'd loan me his car, and I can commute to Dusseldorf. This man is retiring in June. He's going to live in his mansion in France and I was asked to stay with him.

TSUDA: Well, I hope that that will come true, then. Very good. Well, thank you very much, and if we have any other interesting anecdotes, we can always add an addendum. Thank you very much.

¹ Zen Monshu: Previous Abbot Kosho Ohtani, Father of present Abbot Koshin Ohtani

FAITH IS A GIFT



.....

NEWTON ISHIURA

Much has been said on the subject of Buddhism, both for and against its leadership in world thought during recent times. We cannot however take away the accepted principles of compassion, tolerance and of universalism found in Buddhism.

The contemporary writings are based on Buddhism as a philosophy. This article, however, deals primarily on a religious aspect as it is practiced.

People today look to Japan in discussing Mahayana Buddhism since it has infiltrated deeply into its culture.

This leaflet deals with Shinran Shonin's faith which came into being during the Kamakura period (1185-1333 A.D.). The common people were in spiritual anarchy, overrun by continuous internal war and corruption. However, the religion realized by Shinran Shonin brought much comfort to many.

Shinran Shonin took no credit for his founding a new sect. "I have no disciples to teach, for nothing have I to teach them. I only teach to others to believe as I do", he said. Shinran and his followers stood on one and the same plane as to their belief in their common Father, Amita Tathagata. In the presence of Amita, all were equal.

The quest for accumulating knowledge was not well received by Shinran Shonin for he concluded that notwithstanding all that has been done and all his faith in himself, he advanced not a single step nearer the goal. Shinran confessed, "It grows dark, but the goal is still far off!" This is a sincere admission from Shinran who was awakened to the salvation of "man" rather than accumulating knowledge.

As the sages knelt, they found themselves unfit for the ordeal because of what he himself regarded as his inferior disposition. "How grievous it is that I cannot accomplish the difficult task prescribed for loosening the chains of bondage of sin and delusion! Is there no other way available to an inferior person like myself?"

These confessions must be studied in political, social and economic aspects as the country was in a political turmoil in the 12th century. Provincial revolution knew no way to peace, and the corruption of the ecclesiastical institution were exposed. This period of

the dark ages was called "the latter days" and the theory of Genshin, the sixth patriarch of the Shin Church caught on like fire, for the people who were groping in agony found repose and gave incentive to a simple faith in the grace of Amita Buddha.

Ritualism and methodic contemplation were the "path for the wise" while the "path to the land of purity" was for the sinful and depraved beings. It was an appor-tune time for the rise of this new gospel for salvation.

The fundamental tenet of "Amita-ism" was simple: An absolute faith in the redeeming power of the all-compassionate Buddha embodied in the person of Amita. The scheme of salvation being completed on the part of the Buddha in his long training and accumulated merit. Accepting and calling this name, Namo Amita Butsu, was the fundamental requisite of faith. In the completion of salvation, sin nor weakness can be an obstacle because the saving power is unconditional. We can discern the all-embracing salvation in Honen's Catechism In Twelve Articles: "There shall be no distinction, no regard to male or female, good or bad, exalted or lowly; none shall fail to be in His Land of Purity after having called with complete desire on Amita. Just as a bulky boulder may pass over the sea, if loaded on a ship, and accom-plish a voyage of myriads of leagues without sinking, so we, though our sin be heavy as stone, are borne on the ship of Amita's primal vow and cross to the other shore without sinking in the sea of repeated births and deaths."

The religion of Honen was a simple gospel of sal-vation by faith. Soon, however, among his followers dis-sension on doctrinal matters ensued. There arose the doctrine of "One Thought"(ichinengi) based on the concep-tion of the identity of our mind with Buddha. The Pure Land sect identifies the thought of Buddha with Amita's vow, hence it is an assurance of salvation. (One thought-three thousand: In one thought to survey or embrace the 3,000 worlds, or a chiliocosmos with all its forms of existence; to see the universe as a thought, it is a T'ien -t'ai mode of meditation). The other insisted on the ne-cessity of many, that is, constant thoughts on Buddha (tanengi).

Furthermore, a severe dispute that later developed to a turning point in regards to emphasis of whether the faith on our part, the counterpart of Buddha's grace was to be ascribed in its origin, to our own will and capacity

or solely to Buddha's free gift.

The important point in the dispute was the differ-ent degree of emphasis laid on the meaning of the "sav-ing power of the vows," the vows taken by Buddha Amita. Buddha's grace to save mankind and our faith to trust in his holy vow unconditionally were recognized as essential, but question was raised as to whether even our faith it-self was a free gift of grace having nothing to do with our capacity or intentions. Conspicuously enough, the all important scale of stress led to a representative deve-lopment of Shinran Shonin's interpretation that even faith is not our own act or possession but exclusively the gift of grace.

Shinran carried the idea of Buddha's grace to ex-treme conclusions. Shinran turned Honen's discourse of "Even an evil man will be received in Buddha's Land, how much more a good man!" into "Even a good man will be gift of Buddha becoming the fundamental tenet.

Thus the belief expressed by Shinran is a religion of "naturalness" as the salvation provided for us by Buddha is simply to be accepted and relied upon without questioning or condition. The "Noble Path" in Shinranism is the "Nembutsu Way" by reciting the Nembutsu, Namo Amita Butsu, in thankfulness, as it is so clearly ex-pressed in the Creed of the Shinshu Buddhists.

THE CREED

We rely upon Tathagata Amitabha with our whole heart for the Enlightenment in the life to come. Abstain-ing from all sundry practices and teachings, and giving up the trust in our powerless self.

We believe that the assurance of our Rebirth through His Salvation comes at the very moment we put our Faith in Him, and we call the Name, Namo Amita-but-su in happiness and thankfulness of His Mercy.

We also acknowledge gratefully the benign bene-volence of our Founder and the succeeding Masters who have led us to believe in this profound teaching; and we do now endeavor to follow throughout our lives the Way laid down for us.

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